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Hants Colleges Cup final special

see pages 16/17 and 27

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Non league special



NINE great pages of news and views inside!

THE BEAUTY OF THIS SAINTS TEAM!

Paine: We can beat anyone



TERRY Paine insists Saints can upset title contenders Leicester when the sides meet in a huge Premier League clash next weekend.

The Foxes have only been beaten three times in the league all season, and go into next Sunday's game at the King Power stadium five points clear at the top with seven games to play.

Despite Saints' lofty position, many are already predicting a Leicester victory.

However, Saints' record appearance holder Paine doesn't see it that way.

Writing in his exclusive column in today's Pink, he said: "The unpredictability is the unpredictability of the league."

"Southampton are at Leicester the next game. It wouldn't surprise me if we won."

"The beauty of this team is we can go anywhere and get a result."

"I think that augers well for the future."

● Full story on page 3



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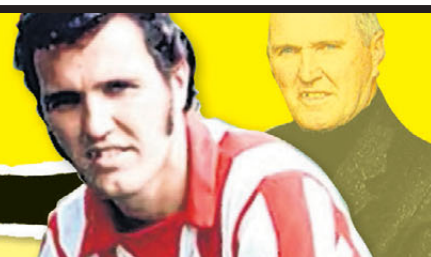
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Paine's World

The Saints legend's

EXCLUSIVE

column on all things football



Saints can still soar amid unpredictability

AT THE beginning of the season with all the changes that were happening at Southampton and with all those brought in, coupled with a change of goalkeeper with Fraser Forster out for so long, I thought a finish around about eighth position would be more than acceptable.

I haven't really changed that opinion and we are hovering in that region.

The way things have gone with Southampton they have had their poor runs but certainly come back with a bang and had good runs.

It's been a mixture of an inconsistent season with a certain amount of disappointment, but at the same time some excellent and remarkable results in the runs that they've had.

People were talking about how good it was last Sunday and I did cover the game live here in South Africa. Being 2-0 down to Liverpool but going on to win it 3-2 was pretty remarkable, but I thought the week before was the big turning point at Stoke.

Stoke were flying at the time. Mark Hughes has turned things round and it has been bearing fruit and I thought that was a hard game in the run-in and if we had come away with nothing it wouldn't have surprised me. To win that game shows what we've got in the ranks now.

Since the beginning of the season the new players coming into the squad, and with the return of Forster, we look like a side who can get a result anywhere, home or away.

I have been impressed that those players that have come in have got a lot better.

They were finding their feet to start with, which is understandable. I'm one who never really judges a player on his first season. I like him to get the second season underway before I come to an opinion, but there has been an improvement in those players that came in.

Now when we have a look at the squad, right the way through the team there is strength and if one player is out another comes in and does a job – no more so than the two substitutes at half time against Liverpool in Wanyama and Mane.

The physical presence of Wanyama is huge.

I know he gets into trouble at times, but that's the nature of his game and it's what he's all about.

He was particularly special in terms of his physical presence and Mane has improved as far as I can see as a team player.

We always knew he had that pace to get in behind and the fact he could score goals in Austria made you think he could do it in England.

Maybe the break he's had has made him a



Virgil van Dijk has been very impressive for Saints since he arrived from Celtic last summer

much better team player. I have been waiting for that to show through.

There is no doubt about his pace to get in behind and the ability to do that, and want to do that, is so special and that showed itself in the second half.

Virgil van Dijk I think has also done remarkably well this season.

Whichever formation they have played he seems comfortable, whether it's three at the back or a flat back four.

I have liked it at times when Bertrand has dropped in there before and Ronald Koeman has gone with Targett on the wing. That has suited us at times.

Like any team we would always like to score a few more goals but that's the hardest thing in the world. You can't guarantee that. I look at a combination of Long, Pelle, Mane, Austin and think that's strong. Also Rodriguez comes into that as well, although he's not been played much as an out and out striker.

When players have been away, like Rodriguez, when they come back it's like a new player.

The goalkeeper was out for 10 months, he's back and looks like he will be in goal for England against Germany.

He's nice and fresh now and, nothing against Stekelenburg, but Forster's return coincided with us going six matches without conceding. It just shows you sometimes that a bit of the puzzle, when it's not there, nothing seems to work.

When Wanyama came straight in at half time against Liverpool and slotted in they looked a different team, and with Mane up front.

That jigsaw puzzle when you can't quite fit the pieces together can be difficult.

In terms of the last seven games, the problem with this season is that it's so unpredictable. If they won the next three or four games it wouldn't surprise me; if they lost them it wouldn't surprise me.

On the show I do in South Africa we went through the top seven and the games they have left in the run-in and you wouldn't say for definite who will win where.

The ones with the easiest run-in are Arsenal. They look to have a great chance of winning most of them, but who knows?

The unpredictability is the unpredictability of the league.

Southampton are at Leicester the next game. It wouldn't surprise me if we won.

The beauty of this team is we can go any-

where and get a result.

I think that augers well for the future.

Rodriguez got a hat-trick for the under-21s and Charlie Austin looks like getting fit again, which is great news.

● I've had no information yet as to what is happening at the moment with regards to the 50th anniversary of England winning the World Cup, but it's too long really.

From an England point of view, from a team point of view, 50 years is a long time not to get another one.

I like any big anniversary and 50 years is a long time.

It would be nice to bring back memories of what England could do and what they did do.

The advantage of being at home in 1966 was huge in most ways. There was an extra pressure involved but we seemed to roll with that OK to go on and win the tournament.

I think it would be nice to meet up again. It's always nice to celebrate.

English football wasn't born in 1992 when the Premier League was born. There was plenty going on before that and some great players playing in the First Division in those days.

SAINTS SPOTLIGHT



Great memories from 1976



Lawrie McMenemy on the open topped bus that paraded Saints' FA Cup winners around the city centre the day after their Wembley success.



McMenemy celebrates the semi final win.



Action from the Wembley success.



Lawrie McMenemy with the FA Cup.

THE countdown is well and truly on to the 40th anniversary celebrations of Saints winning the FA Cup.

A golf day, gala dinner and Mayflower Theatre nostalgia-fest are all planned for the end of April and beginning of May.

The Southern Daily Echo will also be bringing out a special 84-page souvenir magazine packed full of images from the memorable 1976 FA Cup run.

Lawrie McMenemy, who managed Saints to their most famous win, has provided numerous photos for the Echo special which is on sale in mid-April.

Some of them are reproduced here, and they remain wonderful images of a magical time for all Saints supporters.



Wembley goal hero Bobby Stokes shows off the FA Cup to the thousands of Saints fans.

Vokes can do a job

WALES manager Chris Coleman has backed ex-Cherries striker Sam Vokes to make his mark on the Premier League next year if Burnley win promotion.

The Lymington-born 26-year-old striker, a lifelong Saints fan, has scored 10 times in his past 14 fixtures for the Clarets, who are top of the Championship with only eight games to go.

Last season, when Burnley were playing in the Premier League, Vokes missed the majority of the campaign having torn his cruciate ligament, and his only goal of the season came in an FA Cup tie with Tottenham.

However, his international manager is confident that he can have an impact at that level should Burnley clinch promotion over the coming weeks.

"He's good enough to play in the Premier League," said Coleman, who started Vokes against Northern Ireland on Thursday.

"He's a different type if you think of Premier League strikers, there's not many like Sam.

"We're not really a 4-4-2 team that gets wide and crosses. We need to cross a bit more, especially when he's playing because he likes attacking a cross. We normally build up play and slide passes.

"For Sam, he missed that season with his knee injury in the Premier League. He sees it now as wanting to make up for that season."



Sam Vokes

Gazza is recovering

FORMER England midfielder Paul Gascoigne has said he is "determined to get back on track" as he continues his struggle with alcoholism.

The 48-year-old was said to have had "a bad week" as pictures emerged of him with cuts to his face, appearing to carry a bottle of alcohol and being accompanied by a police officer.

The troubled former Newcastle, Tottenham and Rangers player is now recovering at home, his management said, after reports that he had relapsed earlier this week.

In a statement on its Facebook page, it said: "Paul has had a bad week ... he is recovering. He told me he's been working out and getting stronger."



England's Chris Jordan, second right, is congratulated by teammates after dismissing Sri Lanka's Dinesh Chandimal.

Stokes keeps his cool as England reach semis

ENGLAND booked a World Twenty20 semi-final with New Zealand after Ben Stokes kept his cool in a nerve-shredding finale against Sri Lanka.

Stokes was handed the last over the match, with Sri Lanka needing 15 to win and captain Angelo Mathews on strike having hit a brutal half-century. But Stokes showed the calmest head in Delhi, conceding just four runs with a measured display of full-pitched fast bowling in pressure-cooker conditions. Mathews was equally deserving of a place on the winning side, having dragged his side back from the depths of 15 for four in pursuit of 172. He finished with an injured hamstring that hindered his progress at the close and a fine knock of 73 not out in 54 deliveries.

England's 171 for four was built around Jos Buttler's brilliant 66 not out and 42 from Jason Roy at the top of the order.

● New Zealand maintained their 100 per cent record with a dominant 75-run victory in Kolkata that sent Bangladesh home winless.

Already assured of a semi-final spot, the Black Caps' bowlers produced another excellent display to defend 146 with ease and secure a fourth Group 2 triumph.

Bangladesh soon slipped to 43 for six in reply and, after an 11-minute delay for floodlight failure, were dismissed for 70 inside 16 overs as Grant Elliott took three wickets for 12 runs



Jos Buttler salutes his half-century during England's win against Sri Lanka.

from four overs and Ish Sodhi claimed 3-21.

The Tigers' 20-year-old left-arm-er Mustafizur Rahman also excelled with the ball, outfoxing the New Zealand batsmen with his slower-ball cutters to return career-best Twenty20 international figures of five for 22.

● Retired bowler Mitchell Johnson has fanned the flames ahead of Australia's pivotal World Twenty20 clash with India by questioning Virat Kohli's ability to handle pressure.

The hosts meet Australia in Mohali on Sunday to determine

who joins Group Two winners New Zealand in the last four and India will hope their 27-year-old superstar Kohli can come to the fore in the all-or-nothing clash.

India's number three has been the Aussies' nemesis of late, scoring half-centuries in each of three T20s between the two countries in January, which came on the back of their five-match one-day international series when he averaged 76.2.

Kohli warned Australia that any attempts to get under his skin out in the middle would

only motivate him further, yet the sledging began on social media courtesy of Johnson.

The 34-year-old, who called it a day on the international circuit last year, took to Twitter to highlight Kohli's World Cup semi-final innings in 2015, when he made just one before Johnson removed him.

Quoting a tweet from Cricket Australia which included Kohli's assertion he is motivated by verbal sparring, Johnson said: "Love it!! Went missing in WC semi last yr when it really counts"

The five lessons we have learnt from the 2016 Six Nations

ENGLAND secured their first Grand Slam since 2003 as head coach Eddie Jones made a pivotal and immediate impact in his new job.

Here, the Sports Pink examines five key things we have learned from this year's RBS 6 Nations.

1. Rugby has lost the moral high ground

From the plush fields of Eton to the dockyards of Grimsby, whatever the level, whatever the atmosphere, rugby has always claimed moral superiority. No longer. Even if Joe Marler's "gypsy boy" slur towards Wales' Samson Lee truly was purely "in the heat of the moment", this is no excuse. Six Nations chiefs missed the chance to discipline Marler, and send the right message that racism or bigotry of any kind will not be tolerated. Warren Gatland misread the mood when branding Marler's actions "banter", and later apologised. Had the very same circumstances occurred in Premier League or international football, the offending player would have most likely faced a swift ban. As it was both the Six Nations and England accepted Marler's full apology as sufficient, clearing the Harlequins prop to return to action. World Rugby is investigating and could impose a retrospective ban next week. But the damage is already done.

2. Wales need to sharpen their attack not abandon "Warrenball"
Forget Wales' 67-14 demolition of Italy on the tournament's final day; this year the Italians have been so poor their matches hardly count. Warren Gatland's famed robust and direct gameplan has come under fire at times throughout the Six Nations, as Wales have botched a high number of promising openings. The method still works, it is merely the execution that requires attention.

3. Conor O'Shea has a monumental job on his hands to turn Italy into credible Six Nations performers
The former Ireland full-back will leave his Harlequins coaching post this summer, and should shortly be confirmed as Italy's new head coach. O'Shea has performed administration

roles in the past, working with England's academy in the Rugby Football Union (RFU). He knows how to build infrastructure and nurture young talent, and he will need to bring all of that acumen to bear with the struggling Azzurri. O'Shea can certainly improve matters, because frankly, Italy could hardly fall any lower. Italy shipped the second-highest number of points in Six Nations history, but this was their worst campaign to date. Calls for promotion and relegation grow louder by the minute, to allow the likes of Georgia and Romania to progress. O'Shea will have to turn matters on their head sharpish in order to whip Italy back into some kind of co-ordination.

4. Maro Itoje can become the best in the world
Saracens lock Itoje spent the start of the tournament unable to squeeze into England's matchday 23, with new boss Eddie Jones keen not to overload the 21-year-old. By the end of the campaign the politics and philosophy student was central to England's first Grand Slam since 2003. The studious second row has quickly made himself indispensable to taskmaster head coach Jones and can now install himself among the world's best locks moving forward.

5. Ireland state case for the defence coach
Ireland boss Joe Schmidt did so much right in his first two years at the helm, spearheading successive Six Nations triumphs, that the former Leinster coach almost had carte blanche with his next moves. He shouldered the burden of coaching both defence and attack in this Six Nations, as Ireland wait for Andy Farrell to end his gardening leave before starting his new defensive post. Farrell will start in April once all the loose ends from his previous employment with England are all tied up. And the former dual-code international's start probably cannot come soon enough for Schmidt and company. Ireland suffered several defensive problems throughout this tournament that previously would not have occurred under Schmidt, and ex-defence specialist Les Kiss. Farrell's robust style will suit Schmidt's outlook well and will most likely add further steel to Ireland.



England's Joe Marler, left.

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Adam Rant



The week's big talking points
with ADAM LEITCH

Unforced error by Djokovic over pay

Serb's honesty is refreshing, but argument flawed

NOVAK Djokovic is normally such a statesman of world tennis, but has become embroiled in the sport's most prickly debate – equality.

Raymond Moore, the man who effectively runs the biggest tournament for male and female players outside of the four Grand Slams in Indian Wells, started all this.

He claimed that female players should be on their knees in gratitude that Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal were born.

In the context of the comment the inference was that the pair had done so much for much for the popularity of tennis that the women, who have equal pay in the tournaments in which men also compete, have unjustly benefitted as a result.

Djokovic, fresh off the court after winning the title by smashing Milos Raonic, was asked for his thoughts. They were far more measured than Moore's but he in effect said that men deserved more than they earn now as the men's game is more popular with fans, TV companies etc.

Later in the week he attempted to clarify these comments, but certainly there was no hint of a backtrack.

First things first, Adam Rant does not see the logic in Djokovic's argument, but applauds him for speaking his mind.

The top players of any sport should be prepared to do this, if they think, misguidedly or not, it is for the greater good. Just staying grey to try not to cause any controversy is cowardly.

Indeed, it is a sad indictment on modern day sport that large press teams attempt to do all they can to shield players from this when it rarely does any real harm and more often only increases interest.

Deconstructing Djokovic's argument you come to the conclusion that it really doesn't make any sense.

There is a debate to be had as to whether women should be playing the same number of sets as men at Grand Slams, the tournaments where they benefit most from pay parity, but part of the reason that doesn't happen is that the length of tournaments would need to be extended.

However, the pay of male players is already positively affected by its popularity. The ATP's vastly superior TV deal means that in the many



Novak Djokovic has been the subject of much focus after comments about pay in tennis

tournaments they play without women the players earn considerably more than the female equivalents.

Also, how far do you take this argument?

Adam Rant was at the Wimbledon final last year. Djokovic won the title and yet barely anybody applauded. Roger Federer lost and his ovation felt like it might cause the roof to collapse.

Should, therefore, Federer have been paid more than Djokovic? He was, after all, more popular; and in other matches away from a guaranteed sell-out of a Grand Slam final is a bigger draw than the Serbian, no matter Djokovic's success.

And what of players lower down the ladder?

How many people are crowding in to watch the world number 150 when compared to Djokovic? Does that mean he should only earn a pittance, so all the money can go to the very top players, upon whom the popularity of any sport inevitably rests?

And this is all even before you consider the popularity of the women's game as a standalone entity, and the draw that the likes of Serena Williams provide. Few people would rather watch Williams than, say, the number eight in the men's rankings, so should she not be paid more than him then?

The problem with Djokovic's argument is that if you take it to its end point it all starts to fall apart.

Maybe there is a debate and a discussion to be had over this, which seems impossible as it is immediately branded as sexism. In Djokovic's case this doesn't seem to be true, but Moore's comments had already framed the debate in such a way.

Pay parity is a good thing in the case of tennis, as it is fair.

The sport should spend its time worrying about its far more pressing issues such as making the results of drugs test transparent, and the scourge of match fixing.

This is just a non-issue.

Pragmatic Strachan

GORDON Strachan has always been an astute manager, and it appears he has cracked the code when it comes to managing Scotland.

Though his initial stint in charge has failed to get them qualified for this summer's European Championships, even in its new and extended format, he has clearly learned the lessons.

After the Scots defeated the Czech Republic this week he insisted that though his country are not a great side, they could be decent by working hard. That seems a very sensible way to try and achieve success.

For too long the Scottish team seem to have thought that they will simply be able to compete with other nations, as they once did in the past, by playing them at their own game.

We all know that they simply don't have the quality for that, and Strachan has recognised that too.

That means you have to rely on your ability to scrap and fight, be dogged and determined and outwork teams.

It is the exact mentality Strachan instilled in Saints during his time at St Mary's, and in a short burst it worked a treat.



Gordon Strachan

Legacy of a legend

THERE are many amateur footballers who have a lot to thank Johan Cruyff for.

The Dutch legend passed away this week, and has left behind a fantastic legacy.

To have anything named after you is pretty special, let alone a move you created, in this case the Cruyff turn.

Many a boggy field on a Sunday morning has seen keen amateurs try and pull it off. Often it ends with a face full of mud, a sense of embarrassment and bitter disappointment.

But on the odd occasion it actually comes off, it's the kind of thing that is dreamt about for years on end, and long into retirement.

What a legacy to leave.

Non league FOOTBALL

Spitfires boss Todd: 'We needed to be more ruthless'

Eastleigh held by 10-man Welling

CHRIS Todd bemoaned his Eastleigh team's lack of clinical edge after a gritty ten-man Welling outfit ground out a Good Friday stalemate at the Silverlake Stadium.

The visitors' Michael Bakare was shown a straight red card for a crude 25th minute challenge on Dan Harding, but Todd's side failed to turn their ensuing territorial dominance into three points, *writes PAUL McNAMARA.*

Jack Midson struck the bar with a glaring second-half opportunity, while Josh Payne and Yemi Odubade also went close to cracking a stubborn Welling rearguard.

"We could have been out there all night and still not scored," said Todd. "We weren't clinical enough and things didn't fall our way. But that's football and we have to pick ourselves up for Monday."

"When a team goes down to ten men they sit back and cling on for everything."

"They rode their luck at times, but that can happen, and it caused us more problems than when they had 11 on the pitch."

While reluctant to criticise his team, whose effort couldn't be faulted, Eastleigh boss Todd admitted that a more ruthless approach might have won the Spitfires a vital three-point haul in their chase for a National League play-off berth.

He said: "There were a couple of occasions when we made the wrong decisions outside the box, shooting from long distance and silly things like that."

"You have to be ruthless, get into the box, make sure that last pass is decisive and finish it off."

"But there were a couple of times when the ball bounced along the line, or the keeper's grabbed it on the line and it was really frustrating."

"When the ball didn't go in the net after it hit the crossbar and then bounced down and hit the line (following Midson's second-half opportunity) you just think to yourself: 'it's not meant to be'."

There was a surprise for a 2,037 Bank Holiday Silverlake crowd in the shape of Matty Fanimo's return to Eastleigh colours.

The former West Ham youngster had last turned out for the Spitfires as a sub in an FA Trophy defeat by Gateshead on January 16.

But after introducing Fanimo as a 69th minute sub on Friday, Todd explained that the 22-year-old has fulfilled the criteria demanded of him in order to earn a recall.

"I like Matty," said the Eastleigh manager. "He's a talent. He got to a



Will Evans shoots during Eastleigh's goalless stalemate with Welling.



Jai Reason in action. All pictures by Chris Moorhouse.

point at the club where he was going a bit stale and losing his way. I just told him to go away, knuckle down and get fit, because he had lost his fitness, massively.

"He's done what I asked and I felt he deserved a second chance, so I brought him back."

While neither Fanimo nor any of his teammates could forge a breakthrough against Welling, Todd did at least draw some comfort from a clean sheet and the banking of what could yet be a valuable point.

He said: "Against ten men it is very dangerous."



James Constable is closely marked during the draw with Welling.



Yemi Odubade looks to get a cross in against Welling.

"There were a couple of moments when you thought: 'they could go and nick one here, from nothing'. The positive was that we kept a clean sheet."

"If we can get a win at Torquay, then four points from six over the Easter period would be ok."

5 classic contests

ENGLAND'S preparations for this summer's Euro 2016 finals continued this weekend with a friendly clash against world champions Germany in Berlin.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at five of the classic showdowns.

England 4 West Germany 2 (after extra-time) - World Cup final, July 30, 1966

The Germans went ahead early on through Helmut Haller, but Geoff Hurst and Martin Peters replied for the hosts before Wolfgang Weber's 89th-minute leveller forced extra-time. England subsequently tasted glory after Hurst completed his hat-trick with two more strikes - the first one of the most contentious goal-line controversies of all time.

West Germany 3 England 2 (after extra-time) - World Cup quarter-final, June 14, 1970

The Germans gained World Cup revenge four years later in Mexico with a dramatic comeback victory. Goals from Alan Mullery and Peters had England 2-0 up just after half-time, but Franz Beckenbauer reduced the deficit, Uwe Seeler equalised in the final 10 minutes of normal time and Gerd Muller notched the winner in extra-time.

West Germany 1 England 1 (after extra-time, West Germany won 4-3 on penalties) - World Cup semi-final, July 4, 1990

In another World Cup epic, it was England this time who forced an additional 30 minutes as Gary Lineker cancelled out Andreas Brehme's opener in Turin. Extra-time saw Paul Gascoigne famously left distraught having collected a booking that denied him the chance to appear in the final - and the rest of the team's hopes then also came to an end in the penalty shoot-out as Stuart Pearce and Chris Waddle failed to convert from 12 yards.

Germany 1 England 1 (after extra-time, Germany won 6-5 on penalties) - European Championship semi-final, June 26, 1996

England endured further penalties-based semi-final misery. They had the lead early on at Wembley through Alan Shearer, but Stefan Kuntz swiftly equalised and when spot-kicks were later required, it was Gareth Southgate's turn to feel the anguish Pearce and Waddle had six years earlier. His sudden-death miss was punished by Andreas Moller, and England were out.

Germany 1 England 5 - World Cup qualifier, September 1, 2001

It may not have been at a tournament finals, but England took great satisfaction from this shock thrashing inflicted on the Germans in Munich. The visitors bounced back emphatically after falling behind in the first few minutes to a Carsten Jancker goal, with Michael Owen netting a hat-trick and Steven Gerrard and Emile Heskey also getting on the scoresheet.



Geoff Hurst completes his hat-trick in the 1966 World Cup final.

Non league FOOTBALL



Romsey are architects of their own downfall



Andy Samuels

ROMSEY Town were masters of their own downfall in midweek.

The Bypass boys scored two own goals in a 3-1 defeat to Sydenhams One high-fliers Laverstock & Ford.

Defender Zak Pickett's attempted clearance evaded keeper Amadeusz Skrzyniarz to plunge them into arrears.

It was 2-0 shortly after as the unfortunate Matt Game turned in Archie Lovegrove's shot.

Laverstock scored a third on the break, Adam Jones finishing off a fine move in the second half.

Town captain Dan Fox was switched from midfield to his usual striker's position and sub Kade Thompson injected much-needed guile and pace.

With 15 minutes left Town had a goal

disallowed when Mark Irvine's cross was headed in off the post by Fox, but the linesman decided the ball had not crossed the line.

Romsey scored a consolation five minutes later when Fox headed in a free-kick.

It was Town's third defeat in four matches and came four days after they had beaten Alton Town 2-1.

Manager Andy Samuels said: "We play well one week, then turn in a bad performance the next.

"I feel let down. We have a talented, terrific bunch of lads, but they are naïve at times.

"We were quality all over the park against Alton, but we made it easy for Laverstock.

"We have to learn from games like this if we are to maintain an aim of finishing in the top six.

"Credit to Laverstock who have hit a great spell of form, but tonight I feel we did make the match easy for them.

"I'm obviously disappointed with the players but I know I have a really talented bunch of lads at the club and I'm confident we can learn from this and keep our targets within reach."

Captain Fox was philosophical about the result but knows there's work to be done. "It really didn't go to plan tonight," he admitted.

"Laverstock are a very fit, young team who had a clear game-plan of getting the ball forward early. We didn't react to it until it was too late."

New signing Howard spares City's blushes - at both ends

Winchester keep promotion hopes alive with victory

WINCHESTER City's two scrappy goals summed up a tired looking performance at the Denplan City Ground on Good Friday.

But the result was all that mattered as Paul Masters' men kept their Southern One South & West play-off pot boiling with a 2-1 win over Slimbridge, writes Wendy Gee.

They made a decent start with top scorer Warren Bentley pouncing on the loose ball after keeper George Burton had only half dealt with the fall-out from Danny King's free-kick.

But City were all over the place at times and, after Adam Tomasso had rescued them with a goalline clearance, they criminally switched off from Adam Mace's free kick. Big centre-back Richard Thwaite punished them with a free header that crashed in off the post after 19 minutes.

Howard Newton spared City's blushes by preventing another Thwaite header from crossing the line.

And it was experienced wideman Newton, a recent signing from Chipstead, who clinched victory on 69 minutes when Bentley's delivery from the left caused pandemonium in the area. After several digs at goal, Newton was the one who finally forced the ball in, bringing relief all round.

Ultimately it was just reward for an improved second-half performance by the Citizens who might have had a penalty for a push on Bentley and passed up a couple of decent chances for Newton and Jamie Barron.

But they made agonisingly hard



Winchester trio (from left) Adam Tomasso, Warren Bentley and and Jamie Barron.

work of beating 17th-placed Slimbridge, who had lost five and drawn two of their previous seven league games, and will need to find form again - and quickly - to pose a play-off threat.

"We huffed and puffed," admitted manager Paul Masters.

"I thought we started brightly for 15 minutes, but then we went into ourselves and I was disappointed with the goal we conceded.

"Slimbridge got themselves into the

game and they were probably the better side for the rest of the first half.

"In the second half we did better, but we're a bit flat-footed at the moment."

The win put Winchester fourth on goal difference ahead of today's round of games.

New signing Andy Forbes was neither a player or spectator yesterday, but is expected to get his first run-out against already relegated Bashley in the New Forest on Easter Monday

(3pm).

Forward Dan Cann, currently dual-signed with Blackfield & Langley, may also return to the squad, if fit.

Midfielder Micky Hubbard, who was away on Friday, should also be back.

Winchester City: Brendan Norris, Jake Newton, Danny King, Jamie Barron, Leigh Mills, Jamie Thoroughgood, Adam Roberts (Harrison Fay, 73), Adam Tomasso, Craig Feeney, Warren Bentley, Howard Newton. Subs (not used): Rob Flooks, Dan Sayers. Referee: Mark Lucie. Attendance: 235

Loan stay extended

AFC BOURNEMOUTH youngster Brandon Goodship has extended his loan with Yeovil Town until the end of the season.

The 21-year-old, who played a part in Blackfield & Langley's 2012/13

Sydenhams League title success, initially joined the Glovers for a month and came off the bench in their 1-1 draw with Portsmouth in February.

Since then Goodship has played seven times, scoring his first professional goal in a 1-0 victory at Dagenham & Redbridge.

His Cherries' teammate, ex-Christchurch starlet Harry Cornick, is also on loan to Yeovil.

Brace joy

JAKE Rawkins struck twice as Totton & Eling condemned a woeful Downton to back-to-back defeats in Sydenhams One last Saturday.

Assistant manager Ben Smith nodded Downton in front only for T&E's Steve Jenkin to jink his way through and slot past Robins' keeper Charlie Aldridge.

Rawkins, dual-signed from AFC Totton, bagged a brace after the break, making the most of Dan Savage and Dan Newman not clearing their lines.

Downton's Tom Aldridge mustered a late consolation as T&E triumphed 3-2.

Robins boss Colin Hopkins said: "After three excellent performances in March, this result brought us back down to earth with a bump.

"Not only were we collectively poor, we made three individual errors to gift the result to Totton & Eling which you simply cannot legislate for."

Golf day

EASTLEIGH FC's Annual Golf Day will take place at East Horton Golf Club, near Winchester, on Wednesday, April 27.

The day will consist of bacon rolls and coffee, a full 18-hole round of golf, a hot lunch and a presentation ceremony.

Teams of four are available for £400. Those wishing to purchase a four-ball package but would like to play as a three-ball and have an Eastleigh FC first-team player join you, this can be arranged on a first come, first served basis.

A booking form is available to download from the Eastleigh FC website. Alternatively email Kenny Amor at kamor@eastleighfc.com for more details.

Non league FOOTBALL



'Remarkable' Bashley praised

THERE was no smug posturing from Taunton Town boss Leigh Robinson after his side had blitzed Bashley 11-0 earlier this week.

The Viridor Stadium hammering was the 34th defeat of a long, hard season for Bash, who headed into the Easter programme weighed down by a truly horrendous goal difference of -163.

But rather than concentrate on his own team's sharpshooting heroics, Robinson saluted the New Forest club and their players for keeping going in the face of adversity, *writes Wendy Gee*.

Interviewed on the Peacocks' website straight after his side's landslide Southern One South & West victory, Robinson said: "Rather than talk about the game, I'd rather pay tribute to the players, management and supporters of Bashley."

"For these lads to put the shift in that they are doing on zero budget and purely for the love of the game is remarkable and excellent to see."

"They've travelled two-and-a-half hours on a midweek in their own cars and have given it everything until the 90th minute, which is a credit to them and their club."

"From Premier League to grassroots there are plenty of things wrong with football in this country, in my opinion, but tonight Bashley showed a glimpse of what is good about it."

"We wish them all the best in the future."

Given that Taunton had outclassed promotion rivals Winchester City 3-0 at the Denplan City Ground last Saturday, it was hardly surprising that Bash found the Peacocks hard to tame.

Dale Evans, Lewis Powell and Craig Veal, their scorers at Winchester, all featured prominently again on Tuesday as Taunton racked up their largest win since defeating Westbury United 11-0 in February 2001.

But the night's most prolific scorer was hat-trick man Jamie Price, Taunton's skipper and right wing-back, who won over some fans in the Winchester camp last week.



Taunton boss Leigh Robinson

Taunton manager Leigh salutes Foresters' efforts

City boss Paul Masters singled him out as possibly the best player on the pitch, as did Winchester's captain and top scorer Warren Bentley who was impressed all round.

Bentley said: "They're a very good side and they stopped us playing to our strengths."

"If we meet them in the play-offs,

we're going to have to change things round a bit."

"They've got a really good player in their right wing-back (Price) and they're one of the strongest sides in this league."

"I expect everyone will want to avoid them in the play-offs, but I want another shot at them."

Winchester hope to get some shooting practice in on Easter Monday when it's their turn to take on Bashley (away, 3pm).

But the Foresters - already relegated - will have been heartened by last Saturday's 0-0 draw against Slimbridge. That was only their second league point of the season.

FOOTBALL RESULTS

Saturday, 26 March
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
 Basingstoke 2 Oxford City 0, Concord Rangers 1 Chelmsford 0
 Maidstone 2 Hemel Hempstead 1, St Albans 3 Eastbourne Borough 1, Truro 0
 Sutton 2, Wealdstone 4 Margate 1
 Whitehawk 3 Gosport Borough 0
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division
 Chesham 2 Kings Lynn 0, Cirencester 2 Bedworth 3
 Dorchester 0 Biggleswade 1, Histon 0
 Merthyr Town 2
 Hungerford 2 Dunstable 3, Kettering 1
 Slough 0, Leamington 2 Chippenham 2,
 Paulton Rovers A-A Cambridge City
 Poole Town 1 Stratford 2, Redditch 4
 Bideford 1, St Neots 2 Frome 2
Division One South & West
 Banbury 0 Tiverton 0, Bishops Cleeve 2
 North Leigh 0, Brighthelm 1 Evesham 5,
 Didcot 2 Wantage 0, Marlow 2 AFC
 Totton 1, Shortwood A-A Larkhall, Swindon
 Supermarine 5 Bashley 0, Taunton 3
 Mangotsfield 0, Wimborne 1 Cinderford 0
 Yale 0 Burnham 0
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division
 Andover Town 2 Bournemouth Poppies 1
 Blackfield & Langley 1 Sholing 1,
 Fareham Town 4 Alresford 1
 Hamworthy United 2 Whitchurch 1,
 Hornsea 1 Fawley AFC 1
 Lymington Town 0 Cowes Sports 0,
 Moneyfield 0 Verwood 0
 Newport IOW 1 Brockenhurst 0, Salisbury 4
 Foliant Sports 2
Team Solent 1 AFC Portchester 0
Division One
 Alton 6 US Portsmouth 3, Andover NS 5
 East Cowes Vics 1, Christchurch 0
 Romsey Town 1, Laverslack & Ford 3
 Pewsey Vale 0, New Milton 1 Fleet Spurs 1,
 Ringwood 2 Portland 2
 Tadley Calvea 5 Hythe & Dibden 0,
 Totton & Eling 0 AFC Stoneham 0
PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE
Premier Division
 Baffins Milton Rovers 1 Colden Common 0
 Clanfield 1 Bush Hill 2
 Headley United 3 Stockbridge 2
 Hedge End Rangers 1 Fleetland 1
 Infinity 2 Liss Athletic 6
 Locks Heath 0 Otterbourne 1
 Paulsgrove 3 Liphook 3
 Winchester Castle 1 QK Southampton 0
Division One
 AFC Petersfield 1 Netley Central Sports 0
 Four Marks 1 Sway 0
 Lyndhurst 1 Andover Lions 3
 Michelmersh & Timsbury 1 Hayling United 3
Combination East
 Fleetlands 0 Liss Athletic 1
 Hayling United 2 AFC Petersfield 1
Combination West
 Bush Hill pp Hedge End Rangers
 Otterbourne pp Overton
 QK Southampton 5 Hamble Club 0
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division
 Sholing 1 Moneyfields 4
Division One
 Alresford 1 Totton & Eling 4
 Verwood Town 5 Fawley 3
DREW SMITH SOUTHAMPTON LEAGUE
 Supplementary Cup, semi-finals
 Capital 0 Braishfield 2
 AFC Gulf Western 4 Hedge End Town 0
Premier
 DH Cadnam United 1 Soton University 4
 Soton University 6 Cadnam United 0
 Nursing 2 Comrades 1
Senior 1
 DH AFC Botley 0 East Boldre 0
 East Boldre 0 AFC Botley 1
 BTC Soton Res 3 Park Sports 10
 Chamberlayne pp Comrades Res

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Non league FOOTBALL

'One in the eye' for Sholing's critics as Lee and Zach sign

Boatmen sign two of the area's top forwards

SHOLING boss Dave Diaper says the arrival of Lee Wort and Zach Glasspool is "one in the face" for the rumour mongers who claim the club are on a downward spiral.

There's nothing like signing two of the area's most feared marksmen to make your critics eat their words!

News of Glasspool's impending arrival broke on Monday when Winchester City confirmed he had left them because they could not guarantee he would start every game.

Two days earlier a familiar face had joined the Boatmen for their pre-match warm-up – none other than home-grown talent Lee Wort who has parted company with cash-strapped National League South outfit Gosport Borough.

"It's one in the face for those who've been spreading rumours about where we are as a club," said Diaper.

"Even the chairwoman of our youth section told me she'd heard I was leaving and that everything at Sholing was going downhill.

"Signing Worty and Zach is a clear statement that that's not the case.

"We're always looking to improve our playing strength, as long as it's within budget."

Surrounded by quality

Having spoken at length in recent weeks about the importance of developing young players, Diaper stressed that nothing had changed on that front.

"We still want to bring our young players through and I've said to them that this is a great opportunity to be around Lee and Zach and learn as much as they can from them," he said.

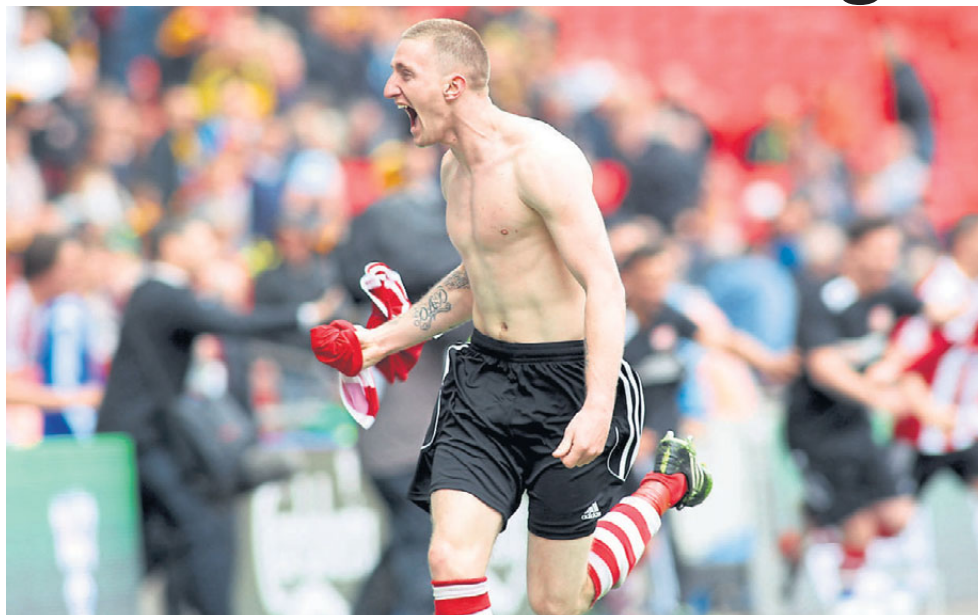
"Being surrounded by quality gives them more chance to get where we want them to be. Experience will rub off."

Wort had last kicked a ball for Sholing at Wembley as the 50-plus goal spearhead of their FA Vase/Sydenhams League double-winning side of 2013/14.

His happy scoring knack caught the eye of Gosport boss Alex Pike, but the St Mary's lad had only limited opportunity to show what he could do in a Borough shirt.

With Justin Bennett and Matt Paterson (now Havant & Waterlooville) banging in goals galore for Gosport last season, Wort struggled for starts. This season he has made 24 Borough appearances – several of them off the bench – and scored four goals.

"It must have been difficult for Alex because Benno's such a good player



Lee Wort celebrates Sholing's FA Vase final success two years ago.



Zach Glasspool, left, in action for Winchester City.

and he and Matt Paterson got a lot of goals," said Diaper.

"Worty had to bide his time and I think he'd have liked more opportunity in his second season.

"He was going to see the season out with Gosport, but he was a free agent and I said why not come back and start scoring again. You can't make headlines if you're not playing.

"If we get him back scoring, then maybe someone else will take a gamble on him, but I'm just pleased to have him back. He's Sholing through and through and it's really good news

for our supporters."

It was Diaper's assistant Stu Hussey who tipped him off about Glasspool wanting to leave Southern One South & West promotion chasers Winchester.

A former Eastleigh youngster, Glasspool made his name at Alresford Town where he struck up a prolific partnership with goal machine Warren Bentley.

The pair continued giving defences nightmares during nearly two seasons with Winchester but, with City pushing hard for a second successive

promotion, Glasspool has walked away.

"I can't comment on what's been said by (Winchester director of football) Dave Malone but, if a player like Zach becomes available, you try and move as quickly as you can," said Diaper.

"We put in an approach straight away and tried to be as courteous as we could.

"It would have been foolish of me to pass up the opportunity of signing him. It's all part of the manager's job."

Ollie: Let's have three up & down

CHRISTCHURCH boss Ollie Cherrett would be in favour of a three-up, three-down system in the Sydenhams Wessex League.

Priority are currently on the outskirts of this season's promotion race from Sydenhams One.

But, irrespective of his side's fate over the next month, Cherrett reckons more movement between the divisions would add fresh impetus.

Discussions are believed to be at a tentative stage among Sydenhams League chiefs, but Cherrett said: "It would be good, it would keep things interesting.

"You look at Division One this season. You have (leaders) Portland with another four or five teams fighting for second place.

"To have another promotion spot would keep the season going that bit longer for a few clubs and it would make the bottom end of the Premier Division more competitive as well.

Held their own

"If you look at the bottom six in the division above and the top five or six at our level, I don't think there is much difference.

"The top teams in our league have all held their own at some point in the season against higher-ranked sides, I don't buy into the idea that they won't be good enough.

"Players want to play for something right to the end of the season. Too many teams are safe with nothing to play for, so it can only be a good thing for everyone involved and for clubs trying to maintain interest in the league.

"Unfortunately, it looks like it will come a season too late for us, but we want to look at that as a positive. It puts more pressure on us to do what we set out to.

"That is getting harder and harder by the week with our performances and results of late, but it will be an interesting situation if it does develop."



Ollie Cherrett

Non league FOOTBALL



Tim Sills, right

Sills proves he has still got it

BOSS Jason Matthews heaped praise on Weymouth's 36-year-old front-man Tim Sills after he came off bench to score a vital winner in Monday's 1-0 result at Hungerford Town.

Former Torquay and Aldershot man Sills, now player-assistant-manager to Matthews at the Bob Lucas Stadium, has only featured fleetingly for the Terras in

league action this season, but delivered the goods when it really mattered against the Crusaders.

Matthews, whose side are pushing for an Evo-Stik Southern Premier play-off place, said of the Romsey-born ex-Basingstoke and Gosport Borough targetman: "He has been an outstanding assistant to me this year and we are a good team now.

"His performance when he came on was superb.

"He got under Hungerford's skin and they couldn't handle him. Going up the slope he was a very big asset and won nearly all his headers.

"For me, around five seasons ago, he was the best striker in non-League football and he is a good asset to have.

"It was a massive win."

Luke: I still have work to do to nail down a regular spot

Ex-Stag Roberts knows where he must improve

FORMER AFC Totton forward Luke Roberts admits he has work to do to nail down the central striker's role at Poole Town - despite topping the club's scoring charts.

Roberts' brace and singles from Luke Burbidge and substitutes Ashan Holgate and Tony Lee took the Dolphins back to the top of the Southern Premier on goal difference by blitzing patched-up Bedworth United 5-0 last weekend.

Injuries to experienced hitman Richard Gillespie have led to manager Tom Killick delving into the loan market to fill his most problematic position throughout the campaign.

But while Roberts has 12 goals from 27 starts and seven substitute appearances in a range of attacking positions, he understands Killick's thought process.

Roberts, who graduated from the AFC Totton youth ranks and joined Poole in the summer of 2014 after collecting the Stags supporters' player-of-the-season prize, said: "I have always trusted Tommy's decisions. If I don't start, he always gives me a reason.

"Sometimes he feels the game might not play into my hands against the bigger, physical sides but whether or not I'm in the team, I always have confidence in myself to work my way into it.

"Loan players come in but I have still played a lot this season, even if I have been shifted about a bit.

"The gaffer tells me he wants me in the team but to convince him a bit more, I need to improve my away performances.

"I know my hold-up play has to improve as well, that's a key factor because it brings other people into the game. If I can work on these areas, Tommy will have more confidence in me."

Roberts started the rout from Lewis



Luke Roberts celebrates scoring for Poole. Pic: Andrew Orman

Lindsay's threaded pass after eight minutes before a quick one-two saw Abdulai Baggie set Burbidge free to double Poole's lead.

The visitors were reduced to ten men on the stroke of half-time when Daniel Kavanagh upended Baggie when clean through.

Will Spetch's curling free-kick ricocheted off the post for Rob-

erts to blast home the third on 56 minutes.

Poole added further goals through Holgate's cushioned effort and a cool finish from Eastleigh loanee Lee during the final 15 minutes.

Killick confirmed afterwards that Lee's loan had been extended and that James Grainger, a

19-year-old former Portsmouth central midfielder, had dual-registered with Poole and the Spitfires.

Poole dropped to second on Monday, replaced by Redditch who drew 1-1 at home to Frome.

Forrest Gump nets Wessex League goal!

BLACKFIELD & Langley's second goal against Newport IOW last Saturday put assistant manager Chris Farrell in mind of Forrest Gump.

In common with the hero of the 1994 Oscar-winning movie, the scorer Hugh Dathan just didn't stop running!

Taking up the story, Farrell said: "We'd gone one up early on through Sam Lanahan who seems to have got scoring down to a tee.

"Then we had Michael Durdey sent off after about 70 minutes for disagreeing with the referee.

"That gave Newport some impetus and we had to defend for the last 20 minutes until Hugh Dathan scored an individual effort right at the end.

"It was just like Forrest Gump!

"With about 20 seconds to go, Hugh charged down a shot on the edge of our 18-yard box and just ran and ran and ran.

"He ran straight from our box to their box, leaving half the Newport team behind him.

"When he got there, he mis-hit his shot and it bamboozled the 'keeper and went in! We all had a good laugh about it."

Dathan has always had that in his locker, but what really impressed Farrell was summoning up that energy right at the end of the Watersiders' busiest week of the season, writes Wendy Gee.

"We'd played four games in eight days and Hugh had started three of them and finished the other," he said.

"For him to show the desire to do that so late on says a lot about him. It couldn't have happened to a nicer lad."

That victory propelled Blackfield to the top of the Sydenhams Premier Division standings, but their moment in the spotlight didn't last long.

Salisbury, who had five games in hand over the Watersiders, put the first to good use by beating Alresford Town 4-1 on Tuesday and reclaiming their place at the summit.

● Blackfield, meanwhile, suffered late heartbreak at Gosport Borough where their defence of the Russell Cotes Cup fizzled out in a penalty shootout.

All looked good for the Watersiders when Rico Wilson and Lanahan fired them 2-0 up at the break.

But sub Connor May and Justin Bennett, who also missed a penalty, hauled the National League South club back on terms before Gosport won the spot-kick lottery 5-4.

That set Borough up with an all-Portsmouth final against AFC Portchester who saw off Hampshire Premier League underdogs Otterbourne 2-0 in the other semi.

Ryan Smart and Curt Robins scored for Portchester either side of Royals' goalkeeper Lyall Beazley saving Mitch Parker's penalty for the Otters.



Hugh Dathan, left

Non league FOOTBALL



'No reason why Bulls won't win FA Vase,' says Claridge

Whites beaten by Hereford over two legs of semi final

SALISBURY boss Steve Claridge reckons Hereford possess enough star quality to lift the FA Vase at Wembley next month.

Claridge's Whites came up short over both semi-final legs, losing 3-1 on aggregate to the Bulls.

Hereford, the tournament favourites, are now priced 1/3 with bookmakers BetVictor to lift the trophy at Wembley on May 22 where they face Morpeth Town.

"We are a reactive side, not proactive, and that was the difference," the Salisbury chief reflected.

"They've got a bit more experience and quality and it shows.

"Hereford are not a Step 5 side and the players they've got are from a higher level.

"They've got the experience and the ability and there's absolutely no reason why they won't go and win it.

"On a stage like Wembley they should be able to showcase the three or four players who really can play."

'They can hurt you'

The key difference between the sides, concluded former pro striker Claridge, was Hereford's strength in attack.

"We probably didn't have the requisite quality that they did going forward," he said.

"If you are talking about our back four or midfield they are good as Hereford's, but we haven't got the people who can open the door like they have and win you games.

"Hereford's front three are certainly not Wessex League level or Midland Premier League level, they can hurt you - we knew that.

"We knew that if the game did get stretched we'd be taking chances and they would get chances."

Mustapha Bundu's header at Edgar Street was all that separated the sides going into last Saturday's second leg at the Ray Mac, watched by a bumper 3,450 crowd.

Overall advantage

Steve Walker cancelled it out 17 minutes in and the Whites could have extended their lead on the day through Sam Wilson and Brandon Mundy.

But a deflected cross moments before the break allowed Mike Symons to tap home the leveller which restored Hereford's overall advantage in the tie.

And with Peter Beadle's men in the ascendancy, missing a penalty and



FA Vase heartbreak for Salisbury's Tom Whelan.



Steve Walker's goal for Salisbury against Hereford last weekend.

having numerous chances to kill the game, substitute Joe Tumelty wrapped up the tie 3-1 on aggregate in the 78th minute.

"It was a huge disappointment after getting ourselves in a winning position and being the better side in the first half," Claridge reflected.

"We live and learn and that's the first time we've played real quality

like that and one or two [Salisbury players] came up short.

"If we had gone in at 1-0, with a lead that we deserved, we wouldn't have had to chase the game.

"We had an injury and then you have to change it just when you are going to make changes and, all of sudden, that is scuppered because someone has pulled their hamstring

and has to come off.

"And the one or two players that have gone missing have to stay on because we cannot get them off because we haven't got the players to replace them."

Morpeth Town booked their ticket to Wembley with a 2-1 home win over Bowers & Pitsea, sending them through 4-3 on aggregate.

Let's put heartache behind us

SALISBURY'S beaten FA Vase semi-finalists have been challenged to leave their heartbreak behind and go on and lift the Sydenhams Premier Division crown.

Whites' Wembley dream ended with a 3-1 aggregate defeat at the hands of Hereford last Saturday, but manager Steve Claridge has told his players there is still all to play for.

"I have to admit I woke up on Sunday morning and it suddenly hit me just what we had missed out on," said Claridge.

"I'm sure the supporters felt it too, though they have been brilliant in thanking us for our efforts so far this season and, in return, I can't thank them enough for their backing. They were magnificent.

"I hope the players felt the pain as keenly as I did and I hope they will use it to make sure they don't feel that sense of loss again this season.

"We can't afford to let that disappointment linger.

"We've had a great run in the Vase, everybody has enjoyed it and it's made good money for the club. But we've always said that our priority is to get promotion and that is now what we have to focus on.

"We need to remember that the club has come so far in a year - leading the table for so long, making the Vase semi-final, in the final of the Wiltshire Senior Cup and hosting a stadium record (3,450) in a ground we weren't even in a year ago.

"Now we need to finish it off. We've done too well to let all our hard work slip now."

It was business as usual for Salisbury in the league on Tuesday as they ended Blackfield's brief rise to top spot with a 4-1 win at Alresford.

Jack Vallis got victory underway for the Whites, but the former Eastleigh defender ended the night on crutches with suspected ankle ligament damage. An own goal, an Ashley Jarvis penalty and Sam Roberts completed the scoring with Ollie Yates replying.



Steve Claridge.

Non league FOOTBALL

Familiar faces back to aid relegation battle



Dave Lewis during his days as Planemakers captain. Inset: Folland Sports manager Dave Herbert

FOLLAND Sports have turned to two familiar faces to aid their Sydenhams Premier Division relegation fight.

Former manager, coach and team captain Dave Lewis has signed playing forms along with ex-player Paul Vinton who, for many years, was a towering figure at the heart of the Planemakers' defence, *writes Wendy Gee*.

Lewis, long-time No2 to former boss Danny Bowers, took over as manager towards the end of last season before announcing he was taking a year's sabbatical.

But old habits die hard for the combative midfielder who has been getting himself fit playing for the veterans' team.

"I thought I'd dig him up and put his boots back on for him!" laughed boss Dave Herbert.

"Dave wanted to spend more time with his family, but part of the deal was that he would get himself fit and play vets' football.

"I've been trying to get him involved

for a while. He can play either in defence or midfield. His experience speaks for itself."

The same can be said of centre-back Vinton who will be standing down as co-boss of Netley Central Sports at the end of the season.

For many years prior to moving to Netley, the big man had been part of the furniture at Follands Park.

"Paul is someone I look up to myself and he'll help us out in bit parts when he can," said Herbert. "It's more his presence in the dressing room than anything else. He's that old Tony Adams-type character we've been crying out for."

Both Lewis and Vinton can teach the younger generation a thing or two when it comes to passion and dedication.

Midfielder Elliot Richards possesses those attributes in abundance but there are others who have been shown the door because they weren't physically fit or mentally focused enough.

"We've cut the dead wood, the lads who didn't have the fight and hunger,"

Herbert explained.

"We're sticking with the players who are hungry and that's reflecting in our performances."

The Planemakers have certainly shown their stomach for a fight this week.

Last Saturday they romped to a 4-1 success at Brockenhurst with goals from Matt Andrews, Will Harris, Richards and young sub Harry Osman.

Three days later, they found themselves 3-0 down at home to Moneyfields with 15 minutes to play, but Cain Prentice and Harris pulled it back to 3-2.

Come what may with Follands' relegation fight, Herbert is already looking forward to 2016/17.

Having been given the green light to remain at Follands Park next term, the Planemakers are planning to launch a reserve side.

"We're looking for a reserve team manager, ideally one who can bring a team with him," said Herbert. "There are exciting times ahead for the club."

Any candidates for the second-team job can ring Herbert on 07775 845312.



Brian Howard, right.

Non league 'Who's Who' in charity contest

A WHO'S WHO of Hampshire non-league is mobilising for a massive charity football tournament on Easter Sunday.

Around 80 participants - from former Eastleigh stars to Gosport Borough, Sydenhams League and Hampshire Premier League players - are gathering at AFC Totton's Testwood Stadium for the Football for Cancer Charity (FFC) event, writes Peter Howard.

Familiar non-league faces including former Spitfires, Barnsley and Reading midfielder Brian Howard, a host of Sholing's FA Vase 2014 winning squad and Adam Wilde and Justin Bennett from Gosport will be in action.

It is the first time that Football for Cancer has been involved in an event in Southampton, with the majority of its activity based around Portsmouth over the last seven years.

The likes of Pompey legend Alan Knight and former England striker Andy Johnson are patrons of the organisation and they have held a number of different events since 2009, which have raised more than £250,000 for good causes.

Now, with the backing of the local football community led by non-league man Ben Kneller and with the help of Hamble Club manager Scott Marchant and player Danny Cox, FFC have turned their attentions to the Southampton area.

"All the money will be going to Football for Cancer and it will eventually go towards helping people in Southampton that are battling with cancer," said Marchant.

"It's all pay on the gate, we're hoping to raise around £20,000."

The teams are named after

family or friends of people involved in the fundraising that have died of cancer.

The first game kicks off between teams Tom Hefron and Reece Davis at 11.30am this Sunday, before teams Terence Bell and Frank Whitman play at 3pm.

Tickets cost £3 for adults, £1 for OAPs and children.

All proceeds from the day will go to the Football for Cancer charity. Visit fcecvents.com for more details.

TEAMS

Reece Davis (Manager: Lee Burch)
Team: Barry Clements, Andrew Smallpiece, Marc Diaper, Liam Crook, Barry Mason, Chris Mason, Jonny Mulhern, Steven Green, Ben Thomson, Craig Davis, George Day, Bradley Flookes, Danny Stickles, Mark Foreman, Asa Agaboola, Ricky Dugdale, Joe Cooper, Matthew Fry, Liam Hindle, Craig Shrimpton, Frank Whitman (Manager: Carl Bennett)

Team: Bradley Whitman, Sam Jordan, Brian Howard, Justin Bennett, Dave Marden, Patrick Pip Nolan, Christopher Knight, Shane Flookes, John Cole, Terry Cox, Sam Scrase, Kevin Hayter, Kevin Braybrook, Ryan Ashford, Kevin Lewis, Lewis Crook, Giacomo Stevens, Alex Bacon, Joe Harman, Gareth Snelling.

Terence Bell (Manager: Jamie Stapleton)
Joseph Bell, Johnny Betteridge, Adam Wilde, Byron Mason, Peter Castle, Mike Carter, Luke Watts, Wayne O'Dell, Mathew Troon, Ryan Lambert, Ray Ogilvie, Nathan Golden, Ian Proctor, Darren Curtis, Lorimar Mason, Matthew Gregory, Pete Philpott, Dominic Yeandle, Tom Hefron (Manager: Scott Marchant)

Team: Nick O'Donnell, Nick Watts, Daniel Mason, William Tickle, Kevin Brewster, Ricky Bull, Luke Pothercary, Daniel Cox, Richard Bridle, Lee Bright, Tyrone Bowers, Alex Hall, Simon Quirk, Dean Byrne, Richard Luffman, Warren Creasey, Chris Castle, Matthew Hutchings, Daniel Szasz.



Justin Bennett, left.

Non league FOOTBALL

'Prodigal son' Forbes makes shock return to Winchester

Legendary goal ace comes out of retirement

HE is one of the finest players ever to have graced a Winchester City shirt.

And on Easter Monday Andy Forbes could be ready to turn back time having agreed to come out of retirement and play for the Citizens - 12 years after bidding them a fond farewell.

Now 36, Forbes has signed Southern League forms until the end of the season and, fingers crossed, will be part of the squad to face Bashley in the New Forest (3pm).

Following Zach Glasspool's departure, promotion-chasing City desperately needed to get an extra body on board prior to Thursday's transfer deadline to aid their Southern League play-off quest.

But never in their wildest dreams would their diehard fans have imagined seeing Forbes back in the red and black of the cathedral city club.

Even Dave Malone didn't hold out much hope of talking him out of retirement but, for once, City's straight-talking director of football was pleasantly surprised to be proved wrong.

"When I spoke to him I thought it was a long shot," he confessed.

"But Forbsey's agreed to sign for the remainder of the season to help us in our quest for promotion.

"It's a tremendous signing. He may not be available for every game, but his experience and undoubted talent will be a huge asset to us. We probably see him as a striker, but I don't care where he plays! Forbsey can play anywhere.

"We don't expect him to run around like an 18-year-old, but he's been playing some five-a-side and the odd Sunday game and there's no way he'd have signed if he wasn't fit, I know him too well."

Having been turned into a striker by the old Andover FC following his release from Reading, Forbes went on to establish himself as a prolific marksman.

His legendary 76-goal season of 2003/04 will live forever in the memories of Winchester fans who still revered the Reading-based marksman long after he had left for Eastleigh at the end of that memorable FA Vase-winning campaign.

His clinical finishing was a mainstay of the Spitfires' rise to the Conference South and, come New Year's Day 2009, he had netted an impressive 131 goals in 234 Eastleigh appearances.

But injuries interrupted his flow



Pic: Andy Forbes (right) holds the FA aloft with Shaun Dyke. Forbes, below, in action for City in 2004.



and, having increased his tally to 143 goals in 268 appearances, he had a spell away from Eastleigh at Woking and Sutton before return-

ing to the Silverlake to a hero's welcome in the summer of 2011.

Two years later he signed for Gosport Borough having by then

dropped back into the defensive role he had filled during his early Reading days.

Even in those swansong years at Privett Park, success still followed Forbes around with Borough following Eastleigh's footsteps into the Conference South and enjoying a magical Wembley day out in the 2014 FA Trophy final.

Malone tried to signed Forbes when he finally hung up his boots at Gosport but the father-of-two wanted to spend more time with his young family.

Asked if Forbes - named The Non-League Directory's national player-of-the-year for 2004 - was the best he had ever worked with at City, Malone said: "Looking back at our Vase team, Ian Mancey was as good but in a different sort of way and Shaun Dyke was as skilful. But, as a rounded package, Forbsey probably was the best. He's as good as any player ever to have played Wessex football."

Taylor's not ready to hang up boots yet!

JAMES Taylor has been winding down his playing career for several seasons now. But that doesn't mean the 41-year-old Team Solent boss is ready to hang up his boots.

As he proved last Saturday when he scored the Students' winner in a 2-1 result at Whitchurch United, there is life in the old dog yet!

During his heyday with Havant & Waterlooville, Taylor scooped a clutch of golden boot awards and earned caps for England's non-League international team.

The powerful targetman was renowned for his aerial prowess, but asked if his winner at Whitchurch was a trademark Taylor header, he laughed: "No it was trademark tap-in at the far post!"

Taylor had brought himself off the bench after losing defender Ollie Goddard to injury and his second-half strike proved the difference between the sides after Whitchurch's Jack McCarthy had snuffed out Tobi Adekunle's opener.

"It's nice to score every now and then. I think that's double figures for me for the season - I don't know how!" smiled Taylor.

Asked if he would carry on playing for the Southampton Solent University side next season, the super-fit 40-something, who is also an accomplished cricketer for Totton & Eling, said: "I'd imagine I'll still be one of the subs.

"I like my running and enjoy doing The Great South Run. I've done three of them and intend to do another in October.

"It's just trying to find the time to run in between all these games.

"If I had the time, I'd run a lot more because I enjoy it. Perhaps I can do some over the summer when I have a bit more time.

"The only problem I have is that my back plays up now and then."

● TEAM Solent are on their way back to St Mary's.

The Southampton Solent University side will defend the Southampton Senior Cup at the home of the Saints on Wednesday, April 13 (7.30pm).

James Taylor's side came through a tight semi-final 1-0 against Sydenhams Premier rivals Brockenhurst at Sholing on Wednesday.

The deciding goal arrived in the 77th minute, scored by Solent's leading marksman Jesse Waller-Lassen.

Their opponents in the final will be Blackfield & Langley, who overcame Netley Central Sports 2-1 in the other semi.

Solent, who are also through to the semi-finals of the Sydenhams Wessex League Cup, have been named SWL Premier Division club-of-the-month for February.

Their opponents in that competition, Portland United, lifted the Division One prize.



Jesse Waller-Lassen scored Solent's midweek Cup winner

Non league FOOTBALL

From Wembley to Tuesday nights at Stratford Town ...

But Abdulai is relaxed about his journey

IMAGINE going from international recognition and a Wembley final to Tuesday nights at Stratford Town by the age of 23.

Most footballers would despair, writes **ANDY MITCHELL**.

Now imagine being more than 4,000 miles from your family who are living in a country gripped by the Ebola virus.

Suddenly, football is put into perspective.

It is no surprise, then, that when former professional Abdulai Baggie rocks up at Poole Town for his home debut just 14 months after playing against Premier League Swansea for Tranmere in the FA Cup, he does so with a relaxed smile.

The mission is simple – Baggie wants to rekindle the love that made him stay in the UK as a teenager when his parents and step-sister moved back to Sierra Leone nine years ago.

"We moved here when I was seven years old. I can't say it was easy in the first couple of years with trying to learn the language and make friends," said Baggie.

"My family ended up wanting to move back but they didn't want to stop me pursuing my dream of making it in football.

"It has been stop-start for me and there have been difficult times over the past couple of years but you have to try to keep looking forward and do what you can."

Easier said than done.

With Reading as a youngster, the diminutive winger played for England at under-16 and under-17 levels before gaining senior experience on loan.

Aged 18, he enjoyed a brief cameo in the League Two play-off final in 2010 while at Rotherham but following his release by the Royals, tough times lay ahead.

A lack of game time at non-league clubs Hayes & Yeading and Salisbury City left Baggie's career in the wilderness but his Rotherham connection was to provide a lifeline.

Former Millers boss Ronnie Moore took him to Tranmere where he made 55 Football League appearances and

Poole Town's Abdulai Baggie



received a call-up from his country, featuring in Sierra Leone's 1-0 World Cup 2014 qualifier defeat to the Cape Verde Islands.

But within months, the tragedy that struck Baggie's homeland whacked any football worries into row Z with an estimated 4,000 deaths from Ebola in his country alone from December 2013 to January this year.

"My family was not affected, they were far removed from that but when you hear things and live miles away, you do get worried," he added.

"You can't do anything. It is out of your hands, you try to help financially if you can but things like that are out of your control wherever you are.

"It was a difficult time for them and hard for me worrying about that

kind of stuff but thankfully, that has pretty much gone now, hopefully for good."

Baggie left Rovers in March 2015 then joined fallen National North giants Stockport over the summer. He departed in February but has no regrets despite another chequered experience.

"Football has its ups and downs, very rarely does anyone get a smooth ride," he continued.

"I think it is partly to do with luck, your environment and being in the right place at the right time. You can't sulk about it, things happen and you just have to keep plugging away.

"I have been at clubs where people have treated me badly but it doesn't matter what other people think, all I

have ever wanted to do is play football.

"First and foremost, my mum and dad wanted me to stay here to create a living and try to be happy and I think that's what people forget in life.

"Football gets taken very seriously but you have to take away the money and everything else, if you don't enjoy things you lose track of the bigger picture and lose your way."

Poole Town manager Tom Killick accepts Baggie will be looking for a future higher up the food chain but there are no delusions of grandeur.

"It is anyone's dream to play professionally, mine especially, but I am just going to take it step by step," said Baggie.

Mission possible!

TERRY Brown this week returned to Hampshire as the new manager of National League South basement boys Basingstoke Town.

The former Aldershot Town boss was appointed on Tuesday less than 24 hours after it had been announced that Michael Gilkes had been sacked.

Brown has vast experience of Conference football with Hayes, Aldershot, AFC Wimbledon and Margate.

And the 63-year-old will need all of that expertise to rescue a Basingstoke side who, going into today's home game against Oxford City, were 11 points adrift of safety with just eight games remaining.

Brown does not view it as mission impossible.

"Everything is possible in football," he said.

"If I'd told any Leicester City fan this time last year they'd be where they are not, they would've had me certified, wouldn't they?" he smiled.

Brown launched his managerial career at Hayes in 1993 and managed to turn the club around from fighting relegation from the Isthmian League Premier Division to eventually finishing third in what is now the National League by the time he left in 2002.

He took over at Aldershot Town late on in the 2002/03 season and repeated the feat to gain promotion to the Conference National the following campaign and then build a side that finished in the play-offs the next two years in a row.

Brown is perhaps best known for his spell at AFC Wimbledon from 2007 to 2011 where he led the Dons from the Isthmian League to the Football League for the first time in the club's history.

Having been sacked by The Dons in September 2012, Brown took a year out of the game.

He resurfaced in December 2013 as manager of Isthmian League club Margate, guiding them to promotion to the National League South in 2015. However, he was sacked in December.

Brown's first away game as Basingstoke manager will be at Gosport on Monday (3pm).



Terry Brown

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How about this for a world XI?

JOHAN Cruyff was a pioneer of the Dutch philosophy of 'total football'. He 14 titles as a player and manager and scored 293 goals in 521 appearances for five different clubs.

Here, the Sports Pink picks a world XI around Cruyff.

GIANLUIGI BUFFON: Italy's 2006 World Cup-winning goalkeeper set a new Serie A record earlier this month after going 974 minutes without conceding.

CARLOS ALBERTO: Arguably one of the best right-backs in the world in one of the planet's greatest teams having won the World Cup with Brazil in 1970.

The fourth goal in the final against Italy, scored by Carlos Alberto, was arguably the greatest team goal ever scored.

FRANZ BECKENBAUER: Won the World Cup in 1974 and redefined the sweeper role during an incredibly successful club career at Bayern Munich.

BOBBY MOORE: England's World Cup-winning skipper is regarded as one of the best centre-backs of his generation. One of the greatest readers of the game there has ever been and made the art of defending look effortless.

PAOLO MALDINI: A shoo-in for the left-back role. The former AC Milan



Johan Cruyff pictured during his Ajax heyday.

captain, a one-club man with seven Serie A crowns and five European Cup winners' medals.

ZINEDINE ZIDANE: The current boss of Real Madrid inspired France to the 1998 World Cup and claimed Euro 2000 and scored a stunning volley in the 2002 Champions League final for Real.

PEP GUARDIOLA: The future Manchester City boss played under Cruyff at Barcelona, winning the 1992 European Cup at Wembley, four titles and two Copa del Reys under his mentor.

JOHAN CRUYFF: Eight titles at Ajax plus one at Barcelona and Feyenoord as a player, he added four more as Barca manager and a great exponent of the Dutch total football approach.

PELE: He hailed Cruyff as an "example of excellence" but the Brazil striker is an example himself having won three World Cups and scored 1,279 goals between 1956 and 1977.

DIEGO MARADONA: He had a hand in more ways than one - in helping Argentina to the 1986 World Cup and is recognised as one of the greatest ever to have played the game.

LIONEL MESSI: Cruyff did not include the Barcelona star in his own world XI but it is hard to overlook the forward who has 413 goals in 440 games for Barca to date.

Lethal marksman Sa



Jean Collangealo celebrates firing Brockenhurst into an early lead.



Farnborough College celebrated with their silverware.



Runners-up Brockenhurst College.

ACE predator Sam Pedersen dashed Brockenhurst's prospects of lifting the Hampshire Colleges Peter Munro Cup for the first time in 17 years.

He scored both the second half goals - his winner came in stoppage time - as Farnborough came from behind to win 2-1.

The brace took Pedersen's colleges goal tally for the season to 25, the highest by any player, *writes Mike Vimpany.*

The final at AFC Totton's Testwood Stadium seldom rose to any great heights.

Brockenhurst, who reached the final the 'hard way' by knocking out Barton Peveril, Itchen and league champions designate Peter Symonds, certainly began the brighter.

Indeed, they got their noses in front in the 12th minute when Barney Turner, at the far post, headed back a deep cross by Jack Ison for Jean Collangealo to drill a shot into the corner.

But Brock weren't able to build on that early success.

Lee Vint might have increased Brock's lead, but shot across the



Sam Pedersen

face of goal after breaking on the right.

Fifteen minutes from time, Farnborough drew level - Dan Muyambi pushing the ball into a crowded goalmouth following an uncleared corner and Pedersen doing what he's best at.

The final, where chances at both ends were at a premium, looked like going into extra-time when, with referee Steve Currie glancing at his watch, Muyambi again got the ball in from the right and Pedersen bundled it in.

Farnborough celebrated, but it was an unhappy ending for Brock coach Tom Prodomo, who took charge of Bashley's 11-0 rout at Taunton the previous evening.

Prodomo, though, had no hard feelings.

"It's always a nice occasion to end the season with a cup final, particularly as it's the last time many of these boys will play with one another," he said.

"Congratulations to Farnborough who have been a strong side all season.

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m the two-goal hero

Tough tests for Eddie

THE home unions will just about draw breath from another punishing RBS 6 Nations then send their top talents globe-trotting on summer tours. Here, the Sports Pink examines the June prospects of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

ENGLAND (in Australia)
England face Australia in three June Tests. Former Wallabies boss Eddie Jones will undoubtedly relish the chance to ruffle a few feathers in his homeland, especially after England's first Grand Slam triumph since 2003. Beaten 2015 World Cup finalists Australia are once again a true force under Michael Cheika, another no-nonsense Aussie. The verbal sparring between the two coaches could be a show all of its own, but once the rugby gets into swing England will have to raise their level from the Six Nations. England won their last Test 21-20 in Sydney in June 2010, but both sides are now changed beyond recognition. Cheika's Australia dumped England out of their own World Cup with a 33-13 Pool A victory in October, so Jones' men will be out for revenge, however much they fight to downplay it.

VERDICT: Australia to win the series 2-1. Home advantage should steer the Wallabies through, but expect England's mean streak to push Australia all the way.

WALES (in New Zealand)
Wales face the most difficult summer of all the home nations, taking on the All Blacks in three June tests. The statistics are stacked against Warren Gatland's men too - Wales have faced New Zealand seven times in New Zealand, losing all seven and conceding 284 points. The last time Wales beat New Zealand was in Cardiff in 1953, and they have since suffered 26 successive Test defeats. New Zealand are in transition after claiming consecutive World Cup triumphs, with Dan Carter, Richie McCaw and Conrad Smith now retired. But the All Blacks are never really in a state of flux. Take McCaw's replacement Sam Cane - he already has a World Cup winner's medal. Wales were frustrated to finish second in the Six Nations courtesy of defeat to England at Twickenham. But to stand any chance of overturning history, the Welsh must hope for luck on the injury front and then take almost every chance they create.

VERDICT: New Zealand to win 3-0. Much as Wales ought to tour with a potent and robust squad, the All Blacks are not in the business of easing their foot off the gas.

IRELAND (in South Africa)
Ireland are chasing history by aiming for a maiden Test victory over the Springboks in South Africa. Joe Schmidt's men take on the Springboks in Cape Town on June 11, Johannesburg on June 18 and finish their tour with a June 25 clash in Port Elizabeth. Ireland have lost all seven Test matches against the Springboks on South African soil to date. But head coach Schmidt and captain Rory Best are confident they can alter that statistic this summer. Ireland's chances hinge on hurrying a host of top stars back from long-term injury. Peter O'Mahony and Iain Henderson especially would beef up the pack for three incredibly bruising encounters. Tighthead prop Marty Moore's possible return to fitness could also prove pivotal.

VERDICT: South Africa to win the series 2-1. The injuries are the great conditional, but if Ireland can travel at something approaching strength they can end that winless run.

SCOTLAND (in Japan)
Scotland face two Tests in Japan on June 18 and June 25 with the venues still to be confirmed. Before Japan's storming World Cup performance in the autumn, this would have been a walkover. Scotland really should still pull off two victories, but it could be a real battle. Japan's landmark World Cup win over South Africa in the autumn will live long in the memory, and perhaps linger in Scottish minds. Japan must now build to host the World Cup in 2019, and need more challenges like this to close the gap with the globe's top Test outfits. Scotland boss Vern Cotter will demand further improvement after his side finished fourth in the Six Nations. That surely means only two wins will suffice.

VERDICT: Scotland to win the series 2-0. Provided Scotland send a full-strength squad, they should come away with two wins.



Farnborough keeper Harry Warner collects the ball.



Brockenhurst College's Lee Vint fires in a shot.



Aerial action from the colleges cup final.



The Brockenhurst goal comes under pressure



Jean Colleangelo, left.



Lee Vint, right

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CAUGHT ON CAMERA - Saints supporters



Saints fans have had two great wins to celebrate recently - here's a selection of fans pictured before the win at Stoke and during the sensational victory against Liverpool.

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CAUGHT ON CAMERA - Saints supporters



Saints fans pictured at recent games against Stoke, Sunderland, Bournemouth and Chelsea. Can you spot yourself or a friend?

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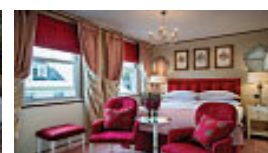


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If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.

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or Sunday
3rd April
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M Coleman	Southampton, Hants	I Keegan	Southampton, Hants
J Comley	Southampton, Hants	A Lewis	Southampton, Hants
W Cramer	Netley Abbey, Hants	D Naylor	Southampton, Hants
B Dixon	Southampton, Hants	G Nickerson	Southampton, Hants
J Franklin	Southampton, Hants	M O'Connor	Southampton, Hants
M Froud	Eastleigh, Hants	S Oldfield	Winchester, Hants
G Glasspool	Southampton, Hants	J Sharpe	Southampton, Hants
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An incident in an Eastleigh v Southampton match

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Daily Echo

Sunday League spotlight



Dan Harket-Burgess

Lamb gets better of Ducks in cup final

AFC WATERSIDE narrowly defeated Junior Three rivals Bitterne Ducks to lift the Southampton Junior A Cup 3-2.

Dean Lamb struck a brace while Nathan Gray also hit the target.

Ducks fought back in the second half after going 2-0 down, with Michael Thomas and Josh Evans-Hunt replying.

Boyatt Wood won an epic AJ Miller Trophy semi-final.

It was 4-4 after full-time before Boyatt progressed thanks to an 8-7 victory from a penalty shootout against KRL.

Andy Phillips (2), Dan Harket-Burgess and Adam Shepherd on target in normal time for Wanderers, while Mike Smith, Charlie Saunders, Mike Saunders and Terry Fredericks found the targets for KRL.

Then it came down to the dreaded spot kicks.

Phillips, Harket-Burgess, Gareth Smith, Anthony Gregory, Craig Proudley, Aaron Parker, Richard Smith and Nick Beatie converted for Boyatt.

Micky Mandair, Rickey Gorman, Charlie Saunderson, Mike Saunders,

Stefan Williams, Sam White and Terry Fredericks found the net for KRL before they dramatically fell short.

Sheldon Nutbeam and Dean Lamb replied as AFC Riverside smashed AFC Waterside 6-2 in the DR Ryder Trophy last four.

In the Charlie Godden Trophy semi-final, Lyndhurst JFC defeated Hunters 2-1.

Mike Huggett scored after 16 seconds before Jack Stickland made it 2-0 before half-time to the New Forest outfit.

Henry Rule replied.

Watts at the double as Sholing take big step to title

SHOLING United edged closer to the Southampton Sunday Premier Division title with a 4-1 thrashing of Bush Hill.

Luke Watts struck twice with Jack Attrill and Greg Ainsworth also scoring as United pulled three points clear of their title rivals with a game to go. Kieran Boakes replied.

Things aren't completely settled in the top-flight, though, as AFC West End and Hamble Roll Call still cling onto their title hopes after a 1-1 draw.

Tim Millar netted for second placed West End, who are now just three points off Sholing with a game in hand.

And, while United have one game to play, West End have two to play - although are one behind on goal difference.

Kristian Pell's effort saw Roll Call keep their fading title hopes alive. They have three games left and are nine points behind the leaders.

Meanwhile, in the Senior Division, Itchen Saints have confirmed their place as champions with a 4-1 win over Cricketers Arms (Fair Oak).

Aiden Johnson (2), Courtney Campbell and Dean Johnson netted with Simon Eastwood replying.

In Junior Division One, Lokomotiv Eastleigh rose to second with a 2-0 win at Test Valley Spartans.

Aaron Cave and AJ Gurung were on target.

In the other game in the third tier, CDA defeated strugglers AFC Portswood 3-2.

Stu Woodley, Rob Elder and an own goal helped mid-table CDA to victory, while Luke Wood and Rob North replied.

● MARCHWOOD Rangers scored all ten goals in their 9-1 win over Junior Division Two outfit Alderbrook United.

Joe McMenemy, Ben Foster (2), Ben Larkin, Ben Slade, Jay Petty, Matt Petty, Sam Slade and Alex Cox were on target, and Marchwood also provided Alderbrook's consolation.

In Junior Division Three, Royale



Luke Watts, left, struck twice for Sholing United.

Marine came from behind to dampen third-placed Bitterne Ducks' title hopes.

Toby Withey gave Ducks the lead, before Gift Ngubane equalised in the second-half.

Ducks are still in with a quack of the title and sit, with three games in hand over leaders King George, just four points off the summit.

In saying that, though, AFC Waterside have five games in hand and are

well placed to take the crown, having won all of their nine games so far.

Elsewhere in Junior Three, Dursley thrashed bottom side Whitehart United 6-1 thanks to goals from Alex Dallimore, Ash Dallimore, Scott Kirkwood, George Slimm and Mike Church (2).

In Junior Four, Portswood United battered lowly Burridge AFC 6-1 with goals from Cameron Roach, Jerome O'Brien, Braiden Hamilton,

Alex Buttler and Kasey Baker. Harrison Kelly replied.

Fawley RBL Reserves continue to lead the division after a 2-0 win over strugglers Hedge End City - Mark Swartz-Mabey and Christopher Lucas scoring.

Forest Home leapt into second place with a 4-1 win at Sholing Monks.

Jake Hughes (2), Keith Hartman and Josh Boud netted, while Joe Glasspool replied.

Title tilt is on track

PORTSWOOD United Reserves kept their City of Southampton Sunday League Junior Division Five title tilt on track with a 5-1 win at bottom side Abbottswood.

Tom Probert hit the lonely reply.

Bridge Manor moved into third with a 4-0 win against Sporting Compass - Shah Bani-Sadr (2), Liam Fielder and Aaron Fielder on target.

In Junior Division Six, Nursling kept themselves at the summit with a 5-2 victory against Riverside Rangers.

Wade Wilson's brace and Mike MacLeod, Shaun New and Rory Hunter-Brown's goals claimed victory.

Josh Willats and Shane Mair replied.

Meanwhile, Winsor Sports kept their title charge on track with a 8-2 pummelling of AFC Carnival.

Alex Clark hit a hat-trick, while Steve Jack and George Jones netted a brace each. Liam Dwyer completed the rout. Pawel Burdzy and Matiej Szumski replied.

In a top five battle between Chamberlayne Athletic Reserves smashed league rivals 4-1 thanks to Lee Osbourne's hat-trick and Ryan Stephenson's effort.

Tom Mac struck a hat-trick for Testwood Tornados in a 5-0 victory against FC Woolston. Stephen Angus struck twice to complete the scoring.

Banister Park and Bishops Waltham Dynamo meanwhile shared a 1-1 draw. Alex Fleet was on target for Banister after Ralph Stansfield had given Dynamos the lead.



Pawel Burdzy

'The best tribute'

AN emotional tribute to Johan Cruyff on Friday saw play stopped in Holland's friendly against France for a minute's applause at a stadium that could soon be renamed in his honour.

As had been planned, the action at the Amsterdam ArenA was temporarily halted in the 14th minute as a mark of respect.

The 22 players on the pitch - all wearing black armbands - then joined in as rapturous applause rang out.

Dutch FA president Michael van Praag said: "I can't wait for the moment when we rename our stadium the Johan Cruyff Arena. It's the best tribute we can pay him."

Hampshire FA Saturday Veterans Cup final



Nursling celebrate with the Hampshire FA Veterans silverware.

NURSLING WIN COUNTY FA VETS CUP FOR FOURTH TIME

NURSLING have won the Hampshire FA Saturday Veterans Cup final for the fourth time.

The 2005, 2009 and 2011 winners beat BTC (Southampton) 3-1 at Romsey Town's Bypass Ground, writes **SIMON WALTER**.

Ben Penfold gave Nursling a 15th-minute lead, which was doubled by captain Stu Salter's 25-yarder after BTC keeper Gavin Bailey tipped over the bar.

Neil Croudson scored a second-half penalty to put Nursling 3-0 up, before BTC threatened a comeback.

Nursling keeper Dave Ariss was relieved to see the ball hit a post after missing his kick when attempting to clear a back pass.

BTC midfielder Keiran Robinson pulled a goal back with an excellent solo effort.

But Nursling threatened a fourth in the latter stages. Bailey pulled off an excellent save to deny number ten Stacey Green and sub Greg King fired a free kick just over the bar.

TEAMS
Nursling: Dave Ariss, Ben Calder, Stu Salter (c), Simon Eagle, Neil Croudson, Jason Ahmet (Greg King 57), Andy Kemp, Darren Hedges (Jimmy Anderson 67), Ben Penfold, Stacey Green (Alan Taylor 80), Danny Gibbons.
BTC (Southampton): Gavin Bailey, Gary Dowd, Mark Fee (Matthew Fray 60), Adam Smith (Nick Lewis 85), Andrew Chance (Phil Brine 85), Stuart Keay, Wayne Brine, Keiran Robinson, Vince Fyfield, Jason Collier, Richard Gray.
Att: 146 Referee: Derek Pratt.



Stuart Salter lifts the trophy for Nursling Vets



Andy Kemp and Wayne Brine in action. Pictures by Allan Hutchings.



Nursling's Stuart Salter is presented with Man of the Match trophy by Simon Walter.

Huff and puff ends with win

SOUTHAMPTON Saints Ladies defeated bottom of the table St Nicholas 2-0 at Sholing FC.

St Nicks travelled with only ten players but nevertheless battled well throughout the entire game.

Saints huffed and puffed their way through the first half with only a handful of clear cut chances - Midge Browning seeing a close range shot turned brilliantly over by Samantha Hollis.

Hollis was to deny Browning again, this time low down at her near post.

On the stroke of half time Saints took the lead after Krystal Whyte put in a peach of a corner to the back stick where Kelly Fripp bundled the ball home.

Saints made a change at the interval with Jess Lewry picking up a slight ankle injury and was replaced by Nicole Matthews.

The second half continued in the same vein with the hosts a little edgy but with St Nicholas unable to offer much upfront.

Becki Bath had the last impact on the match when on 90 minutes she beat two players 30 yards out and hit a screamer in to the top right corner.

The win cemented Southampton's mid-table place in the FA Women's Premier League South.

● In the top tier of the Hampshire County Women's League, Warsash Wasps remain in top spot after a 7-0 win at Stoneham. Kierra Gray and Emma-Jane May both scored twice.

Winchester Flyers Reserves came from behind to win 4-2 against BTC Ladies.

Boscombe beat Alton 2-0 to remain six points adrift of Warsash with two games in hand.

Bournemouth Sports are looking likely Division 2 champions but the battle of the wooden spoon will go right to the wire between Bursledon, QK Sports and Southampton Women Reserves.

Promotion from Division 3 for AFC Potchester took a step closer after they hammered Fleet Town Reserves 10-1 - Amanda Svard bagging a hat-trick.



Goalscorer Kelly Fripp

Hampshire Colleges 2nd XI Cup final



Peter Symonds celebrate winning the silverware.

Jay is Symonds' cup winner

PETER Symonds won the Hampshire Colleges Second XI Cup with a 1-0 win over arch rivals Itchen, with whom they have scrapped out the honours in recent seasons.

Jay Bugg got the all important first half goal - the Westgate whippet coolly lobbing the Itchen goalkeeper after an initial shot had been blocked.

Itchen twice had chances of an equaliser before half-time, but James Burgess blocked one effort and goalkeeper Scott Heelas made a great save right on half-time to keep Symonds' noses in front.

PSC, who have enjoyed a fine season on the soccer field, held on to their lead as the final developed into a scrappy affair, with the dry Test Park pitch making it difficult for the players to keep the ball under control.

"Our back five were outstanding," praised PSC's Rob Kitley.



Peter Symonds' Max Kirwan (centre).



Itchen's Josh Hill (red).



Brad Stacey (left) and Jay Bugg.



All pictures by Chris Moorhouse.



Peter Symonds' Jay Bugg, centre.

Saints fail to protect 3-1 lead

SOUTHAMPTON Saints Reserves went down 4-3 at Queens Park Rangers Reserves - after twice leading by two goals.

After just five minutes, Elle Pearce made a blazing run down the left flank, looked up and squared to Tiff Eley, who scored with a fine shot.

It got better for the visitors when King let rip with a flyer from 20 yards out to double the lead after ten minutes.

QPR latched on to a poor clearance and pulled one back from an unchallenged Skiverton just before the break.

After the interval, the Southampton defence were struggling to contain the Hoops and were anchored to their own 18 yard line.

It came as some surprise, therefore, when a hard-working Sienna White made a brilliant solo run and displayed a coolness beyond her years to extend the lead to two goals again.

With Saints sitting back and absorbing pressure, the inevitable happened.

QPR hit back to level and then, deep into injury time, grabbed a winner.

● In the Winchester Girls League, there was another sparkling performance by Hannah Haughton's Southampton Saints U16's.

They won 5-2 thanks to goals from Libby Dell (3) and White (2) to leapfrog Merley to the top of the table.

The U14 Winchester league is hotting up.

Leaders AFC Boscombe defeated Winchester Flyers 4-2 helped by a hat-trick from the prolific Ellie Chaffe.

She has now scored a sensational 56 goals from just 15 games - 32 goals more than anyone else in the division.

Boscombe might be top but Southampton Saints' U13 rivals are two points behind with two games in hand.

Saints won 3-1 at New Milton with goals from Larrissa White, Berglin and Griffiths.

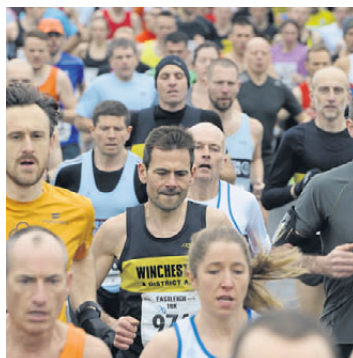
Southampton Saints U12s hammered Portsmouth University 12-1 in the U13 Winchester Girls League.

Larnie Bisson (3), Kira McClatchey (2), Issy Baskett (2), Tilly Thomas, Sydney Whymark, Leah Ballard, Libby Mell and Katie Pakes collected the goals.



Tiff Eley

Eastleigh 10k pic special: Can you spot yourself?



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Who makes our rugby world XV?

THE 2015-16 season has delivered an outstanding World Cup won by New Zealand, and another intriguing RBS 6 Nations Championship that England dominated.

Here, the Sports Pink selects a World XV, based on performances in the two competitions.

15 AYUMU GOROMARU (Japan): Became the first player from a tier-two nation to pass 700 Test points during the course of Japan's memorable World Cup campaign last year.

14 GEORGE NORTH (Wales): Became the first Wales player since Shane Williams eight years ago to score tries in four successive Six Nations games this season. Brilliant match-winner.

13 JESSE KRIEL (South Africa): Only 21, but the Cape Town-born centre performed with a maturity beyond his years at the 2015 World Cup. Subtle skills are matched by considerable power.

12 MATT GITEAU (Australia): Moved past 100 caps for Australia during the World Cup, and the Wallabies centre often appears as though he is gliding through matches with effortless ease.

11 JULIAN SAVEA (New Zealand): The All Blacks' powerhouse wing is a fearsome sight when in full flight. 38 tries in 41 Tests.

10 HANDRE POLLARD (South Africa): At the age of just 22, Pollard has shown that he possesses the all-round game to be South Africa's long-term chief tactical operator. Also a superb goalkicker.

9 AARON SMITH (New Zealand): Works as a tireless general behind the All Blacks pack, mixing his running and kicking game so astutely. Decision-making is world class.



1 MARCOS AYERZA (Argentina): Loosehead Wales' George North

prop Ayerza is an immovable object in a typically robust and powerful Argentina scrum. Technically accomplished and immensely strong.

2 GUILHEM GUIRADO (France) - The new France captain led from the front during this season's Six Nations campaign. A tough-as-nail forward who scored tries against Wales and Scotland, he was a talisman figure that Les Bleus head coach Guy Noves can continue building his team around.

3 RAMIRO HERRERA (Argentina): The 27-year-old tighthead prop was largely unheralded before the World Cup, but his consistent shows of scrummaging power and outstanding technique meant he won many admirers. A true warrior.

4 BRODIE RETALLICK (New Zealand): All Blacks lock continues to go from strength to strength. Uncompromising and technically brilliant.

5 GEORGE KRUIS (England): Took his club second-row partnership with Maro Itoje at Saracens impressively into the Six Nations arena this season, delivering world-class displays. He won 33 line-outs during the tournament.

6 MICHAEL LEITCH (Japan): Japan's inspired skipper led imperiously, making a total of 51 tackles during the World Cup pool stage and driving his team to new heights.

7 DAVID POCOCK (Australia): The master of the breakdown, Pocock secured a total of 14 turnovers for his team during their march to the 2015 World Cup final. The Rolls Royce of back-row forwards.

8 KIERAN READ (New Zealand): The 30-year-old will face one of rugby's biggest tasks this year - replacing a retired Richie McCaw as All Blacks captain - but he is a magnificent player whose consistency of performance shines through.

Mouthwatering prospects

THE prospect of watching Darren Sammy and Shahid Afridi in tandem for Hampshire this summer is certainly an exciting one.

Three months after helping Peshawar Zalmi reach the last four of the Pakistan Super League, the World T20 captains will represent Hampshire during the Natwest T20 Blast, writes Simon Walter.

Afridi's return, for the entirety of the season, was confirmed last month.

Rumours of Sammy's Hampshire signing were doing the rounds during the county's recent pre-season tour of Barbados.

Now that it has been confirmed, there is even more for supporters to look forward to.

With Reece Topley another new boy in Hampshire colours this year, there are three very good reasons to be optimistic about the county's chances of a first limited-overs trophy since the 2012 double.

Financial clout

It is a reminder of the level of Hampshire's ambition, and indeed financial clout, that they have been able to lure another big name to The Ageas Bowl as their third overseas signing for the season.

No doubt Ryan McLaren will replace Sammy in the Blast when the West Indies captain heads home with Fidel Edwards, his former Test teammate, to play for the St Lucia Zouks at the Caribbean Premier League in July.

With Danny Briggs now a Sussex player, Yasir Arafat loaned to Somerset for the season and Owais Shah not returning, having tried to fill Neil McKenzie's spot at number four for the last two summers, Hampshire's team will have a very different look to it for the opening T20 game against Middlesex at Uxbridge on May 27.

Adam Wheeler will surely continue to bat at number three, a role which saw him score the first half-centuries of his T20 career after being promoted for the last six games of last season.

But it will be very interesting to see who bats at two wickets down.

Pivotal position

McKenzie was the master of that particular art but there will be a fresh face this year in what is a pivotal position.

It will be good to see either Liam Dawson or Will Smith take it on.

He may have been surplus to requirements for much of last season, but with Briggs gone I would expect Dawson to get the nod, particularly given the confidence he will have from his England Lions performances and World T20 call-up.

Dawson's McKenzie-like calmness under pressure and ability to rotate the strike would be ideal.

Smith would also be effective there and Sean Ervine may well be considered, but it is probably best



Shahid Afridi, right, in action for Hampshire in 2011.



James Vince will be part of an exciting Hampshire XI in this summer's NatWest T20 Blast.

to keep the latter at number five, a position he has excelled in for many years.

Afridi and Sammy will no doubt bat at six and seven, as they did for the most part during their nine games together for Peshawar.

Pakistan captain Afridi did not have his best tournament with the bat at the PSL, saving his best till the last game - a 19-ball 38 in the 'third qualifying final' defeat to

eventual winners Islamabad United.

But he provided a timely reminder of his talents in Pakistan's first game at the World T20 last week, smashing a 19-ball 49 against Bangladesh.

Sammy captained West Indies to victories against England and Sri Lanka in their first two WT20 games, without batting or bowling.

But he showed what Hampshire

fans can expect at the PSL, scoring 140 runs at 28 (at a strike rate of 152).

After his move to The Ageas Bowl was confirmed, Sammy also gave Hampshire fans a unique insight into what director of cricket Giles White has described as his "infectious personality", posting a hilarious video on his Twitter page in which he expresses his delight at signing for a county with a rich

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ect for Hampshire



New Hampshire signing Darren Sammy.

West Indian heritage.

The first St Lucian to captain the West Indies, Sammy is clearly proud to be following in the footsteps of Roy Marshall, Gordon Greenidge, Andy Roberts and Malcolm Marshall.

And he will provide the sort of joie de vivre that Hampshire's dressing room may have lacked post-McKenzie.

Sammy will be around for at least

eight of the first nine group games and will return in August for the quarter-finals and Finals Day, should Hampshire make it that far for a seventh successive season.

As well as his batting, Sammy provides a more than useful bowling option. He is one of eight potential bowlers in this probable Hampshire T20 side - and that does not include the opening batsmen's occasional off-spin and seam-up:

Carberry, Vince, Wheeler, Dawson, Ervine, Afridi, Sammy, Smith, Wood, Edwards, Topley.

In the meantime, Hampshire's focus is on their first Championship match of the season, at home to Warwickshire on April 10.

Preparations continue with two two-day friendlies next week, against Kent at The Ageas Bowl on Tuesday/Wednesday and Sussex at Hove next Friday/Saturday.

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Monday, March 28

Sky Bet League One: Bury v Gillingham. Crewe v Bradford. Doncaster v Blackpool (Jonathan Veal covering). Millwall v Burton (1945). Oldham v Chesterfield. Port Vale v Barnsley. Scunthorpe v Swindon. Wigan v Rochdale (1330).

Sky Bet League Two: AFC Wimbledon v Portsmouth (1245). Barnet v Luton. Cambridge v Oxford. Carlisle v Bristol Rovers. Crawley v Exeter. Leyton Orient v Hartlepool. Mansfield v Northampton. Newport v Accrington. Notts County v Wycombe. Plymouth v York. Stevenage v Yeovil.

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE
Aldershot v Braintree. Altrincham v Southport. Barrow v FC Halifax. Boreham Wood v Dover. Bromley v Forest Green. Guiseley v Chester. Kidderminster v Tranmere. Lincoln v Gateshead. Macclesfield v Grimsby. Torquay v Eastleigh. Welling v Woking. Wrexham v Cheltenham (5.45, BT Sport).

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
Hemel Hempstead v St Albans (1.00). Bath City v Weston-super-Mare. Bishops Cleeve v Wealdstone. Chelmsford v Maidstone. Eastbourne Borough v Havant & Waterlooville. Ebbsfleet v Dartford. Gosport Borough v Basingstoke. Hayes & Yeading v Maidenhead. Margate v Concord. Oxford City v Truro. Sutton v Whitehawk.

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Bideford v Dorchester. Biggleswade v Histon. Cambridge City v Hitchin. Chippenham v Cirencester. Dunstable v Chesham. Frome v Paulton. Kettering v Bedworth. Kings Lynn v St Neots. Merthyr Town v Redditch. Slough v Hungerford. Stratford v Leamington. Weymouth v Poole Town.

Division One South & West: AFC Totton v Wimborne. Bashley v Winchester City. Burnham v Didcot. Cinderford v Shortwood. Evesham v Bishops Cleeve. Larkhall v Yate. Mangotsfield v Swindon Supermarine. North Leigh v Marlow. Tiverton v Taunton. Wantage v Banbury.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Bemerton HH v Salisbury (3.00). Division One: Portland v Fleet Spurs (3.00)

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Senior Division: Baffins Milton Rovers v Hedge End Rangers. Fleetlands v Infinity. Liphook v Headley. Liss Athletic v Clanfield. Otterbourne v Bush Hill. QK Southampton v Stockbridge.

Tuesday, March 29

SOCCER: International friendlies (1945): England v Holland (2000). Republic of Ireland v Slovakia. Scotland v Denmark.

Sky Bet League One: Coventry v Colchester.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Portchester v Fareham. Alresford v Whitchurch. Bournemouth Poppies Hamworthy Ltd. Cowes Sports v Newport. Folland Sports v Sholing. Lymington Town v Brockenhurst. Moneyfields v Horndean. Team Solent v Verwood.

Division One: Hythe & Dibden v Tadley Calvea. Laverstock & Ford v AFC Stoneham. Ringwood v New Milton. Romsey v Amesbury. Totton & Eling v Christchurch. US Portsmouth v Pewsey Vale.

Wednesday, March 30

Sky Bet League One: Southend v Sheff Utd.

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Cambridge City v Stratford.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Fawley AFC v Blackfield & Langley.

NORTH HANTS SENIOR CUP

Semi-final: Andover Town v Fleet Town.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Senior Division: Baffins Milton Rover v Clanfield (6.00). Bush Hill v Hedge End Rangers (6.00). Hamble Club v Infinity (6.00). Locks Heath v Liss Athletic (7.30). Otterbourne v Winchester Castle (6.00).

Thursday, March 31

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Brockenhurst v Sholing. Horndean v Salisbury.

Friday, April 1

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

Cheltenham v Grimsby (7.45, BT Sport)

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Division One: Downton v Laverstock & Ford.

Saturday, April 2

Barclays Premier League: Arsenal v Watford.

Aston Villa v Chelsea (1245). Bournemouth

v Manchester City. Liverpool v Tottenham

(1715). Norwich v Newcastle. Stoke v Swansea.

Sunderland v West Brom. West Ham v Crystal

Palace.

Sky Bet Championship: Blackburn v Preston

(1230). Bolton v Reading. Brighton v Burnley

(1230). Cardiff v Derby. Charlton v Birmingham.

Fulham v MK Dons. Huddersfield v Sheff Wed.

Hull v Bristol City. Nottingham Forest v Brentford.

Rotherham v Leeds Wolves v Ipswich.

Sky Bet League One: Blackpool v Southend.

Bradford v Scunthorpe. Burton v Bury.

Chesterfield v Port Vale. Colchester v Millwall.

Gillingham v Coventry. Peterborough v Crewe.

Rochdale v Doncaster. Sheffield United v Walsall.

Shrewsbury v Wigan. Swindon v Fleetwood.

Sky Bet League Two: Accrington v Cambridge.

Bristol Rovers v Crawley. Exeter v Plymouth.

Hartlepool v Mansfield. Luton v Stevenage.

Morecambe v Barnet. Northampton v Notts

County. Portsmouth v Carlisle. Wycombe v AFC

Wimbledon. Yeovil v Newport. York v Leyton

Orient.

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE

Aldershot v Barrow. Bromley v Lincoln. Chester v

Boreham Wood. Dover v FC Halifax. Eastleigh v

Guiseley. Forest Green v Wrexham. Gateshead v

Torquay. Kidderminster v Altrincham. Macclesfield

v Braintree. Southport v Woking. Tranmere v

Welling.

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH

Basingstoke v Concord. Bishops Cleeve v

Oxford City. Chelmsford v Bath City. Dartford v

Maidenhead. Hayes & Yeading v Ebbsfleet. Hemel

Hempstead v Gosport Borough. St Albans v

Maidstone. Sutton v Eastbourne Borough. Truro v

Whitehawk. Wealdstone v Havant & Waterlooville.

Weston-super-Mare v Margate.

EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE

Premier Division: Bedworth v Histon. Biggleswade

v Kings Lynn. Cirencester v Bideford. Hungerford

v Merthyr Town. Kettering v Hitchin. Paulton v

Dorchester. Poole Town v Chesham. Redditch v

Leamington. Slough v Chippenham. St Neots v

Cambridge City. Stratford v Dunstable. Weymouth

v Frome.

Division One South & West: AFC Totton v

Burnham. Bashley v Marlow. Bridgwater v

Larkhall. Cinderford v Swindon Supermarine.

Didcot v Banbury. Evesham v Mangotsfield.

Slimbridge v Tiverton. Taunton v Bishops Cleeve.

Wantage v Wimborne. Winchester City v North

Leigh. Yate v Shortwood.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Portchester v Verwood.

Blackfield & Langley v Andover Town.

Brockenhurst v Bournemouth Poppies. Cowes

Sports v Salisbury. Fareham v Fawley. Folland

Sports v Horndean. Lymington v Team Solent.

Newport IoW v Moneyfields. Sholing v Hamworthy

Utd. Whitchurch v Bemerton HH.

Division One: AFC Stoneham v Romsey Town.

Andover NS v Alton. Christchurch v New Milton.

East Cowes Vics v Amesbury. Fleet Spurs

v Tadley Calvea. Hythe & Dibden v Totton &

Eling. Portland v Pewsey Vale. US Portsmouth v

Ringwood.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Senior Division: Baffins Milton Rovers v

Otterbourne. Bush Hill v Hamble Club. Clanfield v

Winchester Castle. Fleetlands v QK Southampton.

Headley v Liss Athletic. Hedge End Rangers v

Paulsgrove. Infinity v Stockbridge. Liphook v

Overton.

Division One: Four Marks v AFC Petersfield.

Netley Central v Broughton. Upham v Lyndhurst.

Combination East: AFC Petersfield v Hayling Utd.

Liss Athletic v Liphook.

Combination West: Hamble Club v Bush Hill.

Otterbourne v QK Southampton.

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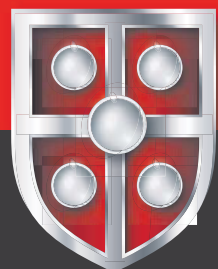
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Howe questions timing of break



Eddie Howe

EDDIE Howe admits he will be on tenterhooks during the international break and has questioned the timing of it, coming during the Premier League run-in.

Cherries boss Howe says he is delighted a number of his players will get a chance to showcase their talents for their respective countries.

But he has also expressed concerns regarding their fitness and well-being ahead of Cherries' final seven games of their maiden campaign in the top flight.

Joshua King and Harry Arter – who both started Cherries' 3-0 defeat at Tottenham – are already major doubts for the visit of Manchester City a week on Saturday.

King did not report for duty with Norway after hurting his calf against Spurs, while Arter was forced to withdraw from the Republic of Ireland squad due to an Achilles problem.

Howe will also have a close eye on Max Gradel, who was called up by Ivory Coast for Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers having only just returned following a six-month injury absence.

And with no fewer than eight other players away – seven of whom are in his Premier League squad – Howe says he can ill afford any further setbacks.

Worry

Howe said: "I am so pleased for all the players.

"Being called up by their respective countries shows they are in good form and performing well for us. All their experiences will hopefully be positive.

"The only wish we have is that they come back fully fit. You don't want to lose your players for a second, let alone a couple of weeks.

"You worry if they are going to come back as fit as they left, that they will be tired and will have had a long journey in the lead-up to the next game.

"In the main, with the experiences they get training with international players and seeing a totally different side to the game, I think it can only be good for their overall development.

"But there are two sides to it and, from the club's perspective, it is not ideal. There are potentially lots of new problems for us. But the date has been in the calendar for a long time so everyone knew about it and there is not a lot we can do."

Artur Boruc (Poland), Shaun MacDonald (Wales), Adam Federici (Australia), Juan Iturbe (Paraguay), Eunan O'Kane (Republic of Ireland), Matt Ritchie (Scotland) and Tokelo Rantie (South Africa) are Cherries' other internationals.

Francis: I never expected to win a shock England call up

CHERRIES defender Simon Francis insisted he had never pinned his hopes on an England call that he felt was never on the cards.

The 31-year-old has earned rave reviews since being switched from right-back to centre-half during the height of Cherries' early-season injury crisis.

His form alongside Steve Cook at the heart of the defence has seen manager Eddie Howe stick with the unlikely double act.

The Cherries captain was thought to be one of the players on Three Lions boss Roy Hodgson's radar when he took in last month's FA Cup fifth-round tie against Everton and the Premier League trip to Watford seven days later.

Legendary England centre-half Terry Butcher was among those to laud Francis's international credentials but the player himself revealed his omission when the squad was announced last week had not been surprising.

Enjoyed

Francis said: "Family and friends might have sent me a text or two to mention it but I stayed well away from that. For me, it wouldn't have happened to be honest.

"I know Roy Hodgson came to a couple of games and might have been watching one or two players but he could have been there to look at some of our opponents as well.

"I didn't think anything of it at all. I have only played the best part of one season in the Premier League and have enjoyed every minute of it.

"My age probably comes into it as well, I'm that little bit older and they are going to Euro 2016 with such a young and talented squad. I think there are a lot of players ahead of me in terms of experience."

And not only is Francis relaxed about being overlooked but also reckons it could prove to be a blessing in disguise.



Simon Francis, left, in action against Saints striker Graziano Pelle.

The Cherries players not called up for international duty jetted straight out to a training camp in Dubai after last Sunday's 3-0 defeat at Tottenham.

And having enjoyed a similar experience last season, Francis wants to tee up another strong sprint to the finish.

"It is a good time to recover and relax but also to get some good training out there," he added.

"People might see that we are off to Dubai and think we're going for a jolly up but it is not like that at all.

"We benefited hugely from it last season, kicked on and won promotion.

Finer details

"It is all about the lads getting together for the week, concentrating on the finer details of what we're doing, getting in some hard work and acclimatising to the heat.

matising to the heat.

"It helps to get away for a week. We're not going to dwell on this performance for too long but at the same time it is a good opportunity to analyse everything.

"We have a good couple of weeks to focus not just on what we did wrong, but the things we did well and take that into the Manchester City game. It has come at a good time for us."

Best of the Six Nations

THE 2016 RBS 6 Nations Championship drew to a close with title winners England clinching the Grand Slam with victory against France in Paris.

Here, the Sports Pink reveals its team of the tournament, one that contains six Englishmen, three Scots, two Welshmen, two Irishmen, plus one Frenchman and one Italian.

15: STUART HOGG (Scotland) - A brilliant broken-field runner who lit up the tournament with his adventurous approach.

14: ANTHONY WATSON (England) - Classy operator and fine finisher who is getting better and better.

13: MICHELE CAMPAGNARO (Italy) - A consistent shining light throughout a gloomy tournament for the Azzurri that saw them once again collect the wooden spoon.

12: JAMIE ROBERTS (Wales) - A midfield powerhouse in attack and defence.

11: GEORGE NORTH (Wales) - Became the first Wales player since Shane Williams eight years ago to score tries in four successive Six Nations games.

10: JOHNNY SEXTON (Ireland) - Tight call between Sexton and Wales number 10 Dan Biggar in a position that saw no player consistently hit the heights this season, but Sexton's ability to make correct choices at critical moments remains strong.

9: BEN YOUNGS (England) - Was outstanding during the Twickenham victory over Wales. Mixed his game well, and just holds off the challenge of France's Maxime Machenaud.

1: JACK McGRATH (Ireland) - Stepped impressively into the void left by injured Leinster prop Cian Healy, showing impressive maturity at the forward coal-face.

2: GUILHEM GUIRADO (France) - A tough-as-teak forward and a talisman figure.

3: WILLEM NEL (Scotland) - Has transformed Scotland's scrum. Powerful and durable, he is a coach's dream.

4: MARO ITOJE (England) - A player performing with maturity way beyond his 21 years. Delivered one of England's great second-row performances against Wales.

5: GEORGE KRUIS (England) - Took his club second-row partnership with Itoje at Saracens impressively into the Test match arena.

6: CHRIS ROBshaw (England) - England's World Cup demise under his leadership seems light years away, such has been his revival. Has arguably never played better.

7: JOHN HARDIE (Scotland) - Scotland's outstanding openside flanker proved himself as a high-class operator at the breakdown, where all good number sevens are judged. Very impressive.

8: BILLY VUNIPOLA (England) - A wrecking ball at the back of England's scrum, his prodigious ball carrying and brute strength gave opposition defences nightmares. Magnificent.



Billy Vunipola

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